This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 08189439 0

THE MYSTERIOUS FORCES of CIVILIZATION

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE MYSTERIOUS FORCES OF CIVILIZATION

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE MYSTERIOUS FORCES OF CIVILIZATION

Written in Persian by an Eminent Bahai Philosopher

TRANSLATED BY

JOHANNA DAWUD

کتاب مستطاب اسرار الغیبیه لاسباب المدنیه

که از ایوخسان داود

از اصل بان فارسی با نگلیسی ترجمه نمود

CHICAGO
BAHAI PUBLISHING SOCIETY
1918

All Rights Reserved

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE MYSTERIOUS FORCES OF CIVILIZATION

Written in Persian by an Eminent Bahai Philosopher

TRANSLATED BY

JOHANNA DAWUD

کتاب مستطاب اسرار الغیبیه لاسباب المدنیه

که از انوخنابن داود

از اصل بان فارسی باکلیتی ترجمه نمود

CHICAGO
BAHAI PUBLISHING SOCIETY
1918

All Rights Reserved

Digitized by Google

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
204321
ASTOR LENOX
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

London Edition published in 1910
Chicago Edition published in 1918
Copyrighted
by Laura Dreyfus-Barney
Paris, France

Digitized by Google

INTRODUCTION

In the name of God the Merciful, the Clement!

Renewed thanks and comprehensive praise are justly due to the Threshold of Unity of the Omnipotent. He hath distinguished and glorified humanity, from amongst all the realities in the world of being, by decreeing its true state to be that of wisdom and understanding, the two great luminaries of the universe.

He hath adorned the mirror of creation with new and wonderful manifestations of his will, by the effect and influence of those great gifts.

Thus, if you look with clear eyes into the world of being it will be apparent to you that in every dispensation, the world, by means of the graces of thought and wisdom, hath been adorned with a new revelation and distinguished by an excellent new gift.

This greater sign of the Incomparable Creator has exceeded transcendental possibility, in his creations and his glory. And the Hadeeth [1] com-

[1] Hadeeth, a tradition or saying attributed to Muhammad or to one of his descendants (through Ali), which, having been transmitted orally, constitutes one of the sources of the religion.

Digitized by Google

mencing "Before all things God created wisdom" beareth witness to this fact. He indeed existed before all things, and was made clear in the temple of humanity. He is pure and holy, who, by the splendors of the lights of the divine grace hath made this dark world the envy of the worlds of light: "He dazzleth the earth with the light of her Lord."

Exalted and holy is the Omnipotent God who made humanity the dawning-place of this infinite grace: "The Merciful One inspired the *Quran,* created man, and taught him the explanation thereof." [1]

Now, O ye who are wise, arise in gratitude for this great goodness, and lift your heads in praise to the Court of the Lord who hath no associate. And with humble applications, address him, praying that you may at this time be favored, and that the manifestations of the Godhead may appear clearly through the discoveries of the souls of men; and that the blazing fire of God, which is deposited within the hearts of men, may no longer remain without a flame.

Behold with the eyes of discernment and see: these signs and thoughts, knowledge, science, art, handicrafts and wonderful inventions, all spring from the wealth of wisdom and understanding. Every nation and tribe which hath dipped deep

[1] *Explanation,* in Arabic *al biyan,* the title given by the Bāb to his principal work, and consequently to his dispensation.

Digitized by Google

in this infinite ocean, hath advanced ahead of all others. The glory, honor and prosperity of a nation depend upon this: that like the sun they rise from the horizon of sound learning. "Are they indeed the same—they who know, and they who do not know?"

The nobility and glory of man consist in the fact that, amidst the beings, he is the dawning place of righteousness. Can any greater blessing be imagined by man than the consciousness that by divine assistance the means of comfort, peace and prosperity of the human race are in his hands?

No, by Allah, there is no greater or more complete pleasure nor happiness than this. How long then shall we seek our own selfish desires on the wings of egoism? How long shall we continue like savage people in the depths of ignorance and misery? God has provided us with eyes in order that we should seek throughout the world, and turn towards the causes of civilization and progress: ears are granted to us that, having listened to the wise precepts of the learned, we may become instructed, and that girding up the loins of resolution, we may follow their excellent example. Senses and inner faculties have been bestowed upon us, that we may use them for the good of mankind, and that we should become distinguished from the lower nature of men by the solidity and justness of our judgment, and continually engage

Digitized by Google

ourselves in well-doing. Thus we may find a sure defense in the impregnable fortress of knowledge, and at all times be prepared to lay a new foundation for the general welfare of our race; to discover a new system upon which to remodel our existence, and to give it openly to the world.

How noble and excellent is man, if he only attain to that state for which he was designed. And how mean and contemptible, if he close his eyes to the public weal, and spend his precious capacities on personal and selfish ends. The greatest happiness lies in the happiness of others. He who urges the matchless steed of endeavor on the racecourse of justice and civilization alone is capable of comprehending the wonderful signs of the natural and spiritual world. For is it not written: "We shall cause them to see our signs, both in the world and in themselves"? In the misery of men lieth their greatest sorrow.

He who remaineth idle and indifferent, and continueth in his egoism, indulging constantly his carnal appetites, descendth to the lowest abyss of degradation, and ignorance. Lower is he than the most dangerous of savage beasts. For it is written: "These indeed are worse than brutes; and meaner than cattle in the sight of God are the deaf and the dumb who will not understand."

Therefore must we gird up the vesture of ambition round the loins of enthusiasm, and earnestly strive to seize the just causes of comfort, peace,

Digitized by Google

happiness, knowledge, culture, art, honor, glory, for the benefit of all, and to show unto men the right path to the summit of true dignity. So that the bright land of human faculty fertilized by the pure water of sincere intention and the limpid river of endeavor, may flourish and become verdant with the fragrant herbs of personal virtue, and the smiling flowers of open praise. And that the character of real worth may prosper and ripen to the envy of the gardens of ancient science.

May this blessed land of Persia become the place of manifesting human qualities in all their degrees, and may the mirror which reflects the world become a mirror reflecting civilization.

The Manifestations of Divine Knowledge and the roseate Dawns of Revelation [1] deserve the utmost glorification and praise, for by the bright sunbeams of their perfect wisdom and comprehensive knowledge, the forgotten people of Yathreb [2] and Batha [3] were raised from the depths of ignorance to the highest peaks of knowledge and understanding. They became the centre of the arts and science, of literature and polite learning.

It is indeed evident to all men of discernment that at this time the world-illumining majesty of the Shah has determined to encourage the progress, comfort and culture of the inhabitants of Persia;

[1] *i. e.* the Prophets and Messengers of God.
[2] The city of Medina.
[3] The city of Mekka.

Digitized by Google

and the building and peopling of their cities. He has resolved to deliver judgment in an equitable spirit, so that by the light of justice he may make Persia the envy of the kingdoms of the East and West, and to restore the fragrance of her former excellent ages, and the joy of life to the veins and arteries of her people. Therefore it seemed well to this servant, out of the fulness of his gratitude, and, for the love of God, to set forth in writing the manifold benefits of his great goodness.

And this servant has withheld his name that this purpose should be made manifest, and that it should be made clear that he possessed no desire but the good of all.

But knowing that virtue is proven by just deeds, he offers, as a faithful servant of God, these few words of exhortation to the sons of his native land.

The Omniscient Lord is my witness, that I seek nothing but the right.

For I, a wanderer in the wilderness of God's love, have strayed in a world wherein censure and praise, appreciation and contumely are of little worth.

"Verily we exhort you for the sake of God, and expect neither your rewards nor yet your thankfulness."

The hand is concealed, but written words are spread abroad; the horse gallopeth but the rider is invisible!

Digitized by Google

THE MYSTERIOUS FORCES OF CIVILIZATION

O PEOPLE OF PERSIA, look in the garden of antiquity, and incline your heads in meditation, seeing with the eyes of wisdom. Repent, for here is the tragedy of a people!

In former times, Persia was verily the heart of the world, and shone among the nations as it were a lighted taper. Her glory and prosperity broke from the horizon of humanity like the true dawn, disseminating the light of knowledge and illumining the nations of the East and West. The fame of her victorious kings reached the ears of the dwellers at the poles of the earth. The majesty of her king of kings humbled the monarchs of Greece and Rome. Her governing wisdom filled the sages with awe, and the rulers of the continents fashioned their laws upon her polity.

The Persians being distinguished amongst the nations of the earth as a people of conquerors, and justly admired for their civilization and learning, their country became the glorious center of all the sciences and arts, the mine of culture and a fount of virtues.

The wisdom and understanding of this people were the admiration of the nations of the world;

Digitized by Google

and their prudence and genius were the cause of emulation amongst all men.

In the records of the Persians, which are supported by the *Old Testament*[1] whose inspiration is accepted by the nations of Europe, it is directly stated that in the time of Cyrus, called in the Persian books Bahman Ibn Isfandiar, the Persian rule extended from the confines of India and China to the uttermost regions of the Yemen and and Ethiopia; this vast empire was divided into three hundred and sixty provinces, over each of which was placed a Satrap.

And it is written in Roman history, that this zealous king, with a numerous army, utterly defeated the all-conquering Romans, and shook the pillars of the kingdoms of the world.

And as regards the history of Abu al Fada, one of the most trustworthy of Arab writers, he states that his conquests extended over the seven divisions of the world.

It is likewise mentioned in his works, as well as in those of other writers, that Faridoon,[2] one of the kings of the Pishdadian dynasty, a prince of great magnificence and sagacity, of incomparable perfection, wisdom and understanding, and a famous conqueror, and superior to all the kings who preceded and succeeded him, divided the

[1] Vide Isaiah xliv. 28, xlv. 1, xlvii. etc.; Daniel vii., viii., etc.

[2] Name of an ancient and celebrated king of Persia, the commencement of whose reign is placed about 750 B. C.

Digitized by Google

whole of the known world amongst his three sons.

In short, according to the histories of the most famous nations, it is manifestly proved that the first great kingdom that was established in the world, and the greatest government that was formed by its inhabitants, was the dominant throne and ruling diadem of Persia.

Therefore, O people of Persia, we must rouse ourselves from the intoxication of carnal desire, and throw off neglectful somnolence and idle sloth.

Let us consider whether the enthusiasm and ambition of rational men can suffer this most blessed land, which aforetime was a fountain of civilization for the whole earth, the spring of glory and of true felicity for humanity, the envy of the world, and the cause of emulation for all Oriental and Occidental peoples, to become a by-word and a reproach amongst all races and nations.

And are its barbarities in the present age to be graven in the eternal pages of the book of time?

Is this nation, which was the noblest of nations, now to remain satisfied in such an exceedingly grievous condition? And is this country, which possesses the most salubrious climate, to be counted among the least progressive of the nations of the world, by reason of its lack of industry and enterprise, and the absence of modern invention? Did not the Persians of a former age excel in every branch of human activity? Were they not the title-

Digitized by Google

page of the book of wisdom? Did they not by the grace of God shine in the horizon of learning like a great luminary? How is it that we are now sunk in contentment, despite our calamitous condition? How is it that we continue to follow the path of our carnal desires? And having been blinded to that which is the cause of prosperity and most acceptable to the Threshold of the Almighty God, and seeking naught but our personal advancement and selfish interests—how is it that this excellent country, which like a lamp shone with the light of learning, the brightness of the sciences and arts, from the pillar of dignity and resolute endeavor, the heights of wisdom, fortitude and humanity—now by reason of our sloth, vanity and indifference, from the lack of knowledge and organization, from the poverty of the zeal and ambition of her people, has suffered the rays of her prosperity to be darkened and well-nigh extinguished?

"The seven heavens and the seven earths are full of pity for the Beloved."

It must not be supposed that the Persians are inferior in their natural vivacity, understanding, ingenuity, wisdom, intellect, perception, or in their physical capacities, to other men. God forbid! On the contrary they have been, and can be, models to all nations and tribes through the originality of their genius. Likewise the kingdom of Persia possesses exceptional fertility, an equable climate, and

Digitized by Google

great natural beauty. Thought, however, is needed; and industry and enterprise, education and energy are wanting; perseverance and enthusiasm alone can avail us.

At the present time, Europe, and some parts of America, are renowned amongst the five continents for the excellence of their government, their eminence in the arts and sciences; whilst in ancient times they were the least considerable of the nations; the most ignorant and slothful of the people of the earth. Justly were they called barbarians; moreover, from the fifth to the fifteenth century of the Christian era, the period known as the Middle Ages, there occurred amongst them so many terrible events and catastrophes, that these ten centuries are counted by Europeans as the dark ages of history.

The foundation of civilization and advancement in Europe was established in the fifteenth century of the Christian era; and all the development and the encouragement of wise men in their ambitions, as well as the general increase of knowledge, date from that period.

Now it seemeth that the Shah, the refuge of the oppressed, by divine aid, and in accordance with the efforts of the Manifestation of Universal Prophethood,[1] hath raised the tent of justice over

[1] Bahā'u'llāh.

Digitized by Google

the whole land; the bright morning of his clemency has followed on the dawn of fair intention, so that the fountain of right and charity will surely be established in this glorious kingdom. He will erect the pillars of learning and civilization and put into practice that which leads to progress, insomuch that this Imperial Age may, in verity, become the envy of all times past. Heretofore it was not manifest that the sovereign in whose directing hand lies the controlling reins of these matters, and upon whose beneficent will dependeth the betterment of men's condition, would, like a gracious father, strive for the advancement and civilization of his people. Therefore, I and my like were silent. But now it is made clear to such as possess understanding, that the king himself has determined, without strife, to lay a sure foundation of progress and just rule for all his people. And these are indeed the signs of his goodness.

Wonderful it is to relate, that the whole people did not arise, and give thanks and praise to God for the great gift, which is indeed a sure mark of the grace of the Most Glorious Lord; that they did not soar up on the wings of joy and thankfulness into the eternal regions of true happiness, and with full hearts give prayer and supplication to the one worthy court of Almighty God for the daily increasing graciousness of our mighty prince.

Some, indeed, whose minds and thoughts have been corrupted by the canker of personal hatred,

Digitized by Google

the serenity of whose judgment has been clouded by the dust of selfishness, and darkened by the mists of interests, and others, debasing their powers in satisfying their worldly desires and ambitions, and in seeking by devious paths their self-advancement, have raised the banner of jealousy, and have lifted up their voices in complaint. Hitherto they querulously asked, "Why is the Shah unmindful of the public weal? And why does he not strive for the peace and quiet of his people?"

But now that his majesty has determined to adopt this great measure, they make other objections. Some say that these ideas are foreign to the genius of Persia, are useless in the present exigencies, and are repugnant to the ancient customs of the country.

And some mistaken persons, having collected a scanty gathering of people who are careless of the principles of their own religion and ignorant of the fundamentals of the true law and devoid of discrimination, address them, saying, "These are the laws of the countries of unbelievers, and therefore, contrary to our observances; whosoever adopts the customs of nations, verily he is of them." [1]

[1] By similar objections, even to-day (March 1909) a certain reactionary clergy is trying to upraise the people against the Constitution, and shortsighted courtiers manage to prevent the Shah Muhammad Ali from letting his subjects profit by the institutions granted to them by his father.

Digitized by Google

Some believe that such alterations must be suffered to proceed by slow and gradual evolution, one thing following on another, adding, "There is no reason for haste."

And others believe that the Persians ought of themselves to discover these things which be necessary to the improvement of their policy, their public instruction, and their civilization. And that there is no need to acquire inspiration from other nations. But each group should dwell in its own world.

O people of Persia! how long will ye wander, how long be filled with vain imaginings; how long continue your differences of opinion, useless antagonism, carelessness and ignorance?

Rivals are awake, while we are negligently sleeping! Other nations strive for the improvement of their public well-being, but every one of us is snared by his worldly ambitions, and "is oft snared anew."

The Lord of the universe is witness that this, his servant, has no aim to flatter, or attract men's hearts in the setting forth of these facts; that he looks for no reward, but gives utterance to his thoughts in obedience to the will of God. Having turned my eyes from the world and its inhabitants, I have taken refuge in the saving grace of the Lord of oneness.

"From you I ask for naught, for God indeed is my recompense."

Digitized by Google

Those who say that these modern ideas accord with the spirit of other nations, and are in no way applicable to the present requirements of the Persian kingdom, indeed forget that those other countries were in former ages even as we are now. How is it that these principles and this civilization have been the cause of the progress of those countries? Have the people of Europe suffered any loss by seeking these ideals? Or have they on the contrary attained the highest degree of material prosperity?

For many centuries, Persia has remained unchanged, retaining her ancient customs. What benefit and progress has she obtained? Had these things not been proved by experience, they would possibly have been doubted by those in the mirror of whose mind the bright light of intention is extinguished. But as it is these causes and effects have been put to the test in other countries; and the benefits of civilization have been so plainly manifested that they are comprehended, even of the wilfully blind.

Now having closed the eyes of prejudice, we must examine by the light of justice, and determine which of these strong bases is contrary to the welfare of Persia, or opposed to the public interest. Is the widening of the circle of knowledge, or the increase of science and the useful arts, and the formation of new and learned callings, raising the people from the depths of ignorance to the lofty

Digitized by Google

horizon of knowledge and virtue, fairly to be considered harmful?

Is the establishment of just rule, according to the precepts of divine Commandment (which is indeed the great support of human happiness), and the firm defense of the rights of the people under its strong protection, the right indeed of public liberty, adverse to the prosperity and safety of our countrymen?

Is it then contrary to the precepts of wisdom, to consider the future with the eyes of discernment, or to attempt to measure the ulterior results of the thoughts of the world, and to compare them with the present condition of affairs, or to strive for the general well-being of the state? Is it not advisable to seek the causes of union with neighboring countries, and to make binding treaties with great nations, to maintain liens of friendship with more favored peoples, or to extend the circle of commerce to the East and West?

Is it contrary to the decrees of Providence, to increase the exportation of the natural products of our country, and to enrich its inhabitants, and are such things repugnant to sound sense and true religion? Should we not endeavor to restrict the powers of governors of districts and provinces, and to limit their tyranny and injustice, which indeed have destroyed the peace and happiness of our land?

Digitized by Google

Should we not compel them to administer judgment according to right laws, and would it not be preferable that the severer penalties, such as those of death and imprisonment, should depend solely on the mandate of his Majesty, and on the decision of the Courts of Justice situated in the capital of the state, so that after due inquiry as to the nature of the crime, punishment should be meted out according to the decree of the law?

Are these things indeed an attack on the foundations of society?

To close the doors of bribery, to abolish the corruption of justice, a practice now favorably known by the fair name of "pishkash" [1] which so hardeneth the hearts of the rulers of this age, that a right interpretation of the law is refused to the beggar, and fairness and equity are utterly forgotten; can this, indeed, be considered to destroy the administration of impartial justice? Should we not, indeed, save the whole body of soldiers, who risk their lives on many occasions of peril in the service of the government and the nation, from the greatness of their poverty, and from sore oppression, and endeavor to ameliorate their lot and to improve their rations, uniforms and dwellings, and strive to teach their officers the art of war and to be prepared for battle? Should we not provide

[1] Pishkash is the name given in Persian to any kind of present given by an inferior to his superior.

Digitized by Google

them with firearms and ammunition, and can we be blamed for our desire to do so?[1]

Some will say that the time is not yet ripe for these suggested improvements; but had they considered justly they would have realized that, if this be the case, it is only owing to the lack of unity in the public mind, and the poverty of zeal and resolution amongst the ministers and nobles of the state. It is most clear and manifest that national affairs will never revolve around their proper axis until the whole people have received instruction, and public thought has been directed to a single end.

The ministers, and even the lowest officers of state, must be completely purified from all suspicion, and must assume the garment of chastity, and of pure life. And the improved condition we so earnestly desire will not have attained until the regulation of public and private manners reach such a degree of perfection that it become impossible for any man to swerve one hair's breadth from the right path, even should he endeavor to do so; so that all government may be administered

[1] In Persia, with the exception of a few regiments under the command of Russian officers, there is practically no army. The soldiers, who are to maintain order throughout the country, receive neither clothes nor pay, and are in consequence obliged to have a trade by which to support themselves. Thus most of the time they cannot be depended upon, except when they can derive their livelihood from plunder. Abdu'l Bahā acknowledges that at the present time an organized state is bound to keep an army; but, on the necessity of suppressing war, see page 73.

Digitized by Google

according to the laws of equity and justice, and that the responsible ministers find it impossible to swerve to the right or to the left, and of necessity pursue the way of righteousness.

All partiality and perversion of justice by bribery, for personal liking or hatred, must be abolished, and both sides should be heard without favor; neither should the wicked be justified, nor the innocent condemned.

The ways and means of producing happiness and good are capable of gross abuse; and much dependth upon the opinion, capability, piety, truthfulness, benevolence, and the extent of zeal of the governed and their rulers. And as for his majesty, he indeed has fulfilled his duty, and has placed the public affairs, upon which depend the well-being of the people, under the capable direction of their representatives in the Councils of the State.

And if these persons[1] retain the robe of chastity and pureness, and do not contaminate the hem thereof with baseness, the assistance of the Almighty will not fail them, but will make them a source of blessing to the whole world. He will cause all manner of benefits to flow both from their tongues and pens, so that the cities of Persia will shine with the light of justice, which, like a flaming torch, will illuminate the habitable globe.

[1] *i.e.* the Ministers of State.

Digitized by Google

"This is nothing but the work of the Almighty God."

But if these persons behave otherwise, evil results will be made manifest; and this, indeed, has been the case, and seen of men's eyes in certain foreign countries, that, after the establishment of a Parliament, this very Assembly became the cause of public confusion, and the good innovations brought forth great catastrophes.

The establishment of Councils, and the foundation of deliberative Assemblies are the solid basis of politics; but there are some rules which are necessary in order firmly to establish such organizations.

Firstly: The elected members must be religious persons, God-fearing, high-minded and followers of the law.

Secondly: They should have an accurate knowledge of the divine Commandments, of the most important fundamental matters and of the rules of the loosing and binding of domestic affairs and foreign relations; they should possess a knowledge of the sciences and arts, necessary to civilization, and finally be contented with the income derived from their personal property.

It must not be imagined that to find members possessed of these qualities would be an impossible, or even a difficult matter; and by the help of God and his saints, and the earnest endeavor of zealous men, all obstacles may be surmounted.

Digitized by Google

"The difficulties of those, who make difficulties in all things, can be overcome, as in the twinkling of an eye."

But if, on the contrary, the members are mean, ignorant, having no knowledge of political economy, wanting in ambition, lacking in zeal, foolish, slothful, and seeking their personal or private advantages, then no good can possibly result from Assemblies so formed. Whereas, in former times, a poor man had to give a gratuity to one individual in order to obtain his rights, he might now be obliged to satisfy the demands of the entire body.

After close consideration, it will be obviously manifest that the chief cause of oppression, injustice and the mismanagement of affairs is owing to the dearth of true piety, and the absence of public instruction.

Take, for example, a people truly pious, proficient in reading, writing, and possessed of a variety of sciences; should an action be perpetrated contrary to the justice of God and of their Sovereign, they must first of all appeal to the local government, and then, if no redress be obtained, they must carry the question in dispute to the High Court, explaining the deviation of their local government from the paths of justice. The High Court should then demand explanations from that locality.

Certainly the person who discovered the error

Digitized by Google

and corruption undermining the local government, should be entitled to gratitude and reward from the public; but the majority of the people, owing to their want of instruction, are unable to make their requirements understood; moreover, there are people, who, from the obscurity of their rank and their lack of education, have not yet experienced the delights of well-being and of true justice; and indeed they have not drunk from the pure water of good intention, and consequently do not appreciate, and have no gratitude for, the exposure of public wrong. They have not yet understood that the greatest glory of man, the universal happiness of the world, consists in the joys of soul, high ambition, good intention, virtue and chastity.

Unhappily they imagine that greatness and glory follow on the accumulation of worldly riches and similar vanities. Now clearly consider! If a man give a thought, he will see, that the Omnipotent God has distinguished him from amongst his creatures by the dress of honor, of virtue and intelligence. "Verily we have created man in the image of God." He has been made to shine forth from the morning of unity by the blessings of divine manifestations.

Man has become the spring of divine wonders and the center of the mysteries of the heavenly Kingdom.

Now why should he pollute this pure mantle with the stain of selfish desires, and exchange this

Digitized by Google

eternal honor for the lowest depths of baseness?

"Dost thou think thy body a small thing, while in thee is enfolded the great universe?"

If it were not my chief object to shorten this treatise, I would write briefly concerning several matters of spiritual interest, and explain the high dignity and sublime glory of true humanity. We will, however, leave this for a later occasion.

In the center of the world of being, the greatest dignity and the highest honor, both outward and inward, and in the beginning and the end, belong to the prophets of God, although poverty indeed has at all times been their chief possession; and for a like cause universal honor is ascribed to the saints and the beloved of God. They did not seek wealth or self-advancement, neither did those kings and rulers whose fame for just government and greatness filled the world occupy themselves only with their personal ambition and the acquirement of riches, but accounted the general weal and the increase of the inhabitants of their countries and of the public treasure as their greatest care. Their glory was not bought with gold or silver, but was purchased by the soundness of their principles and the nobility of their aspirations.

Those great ministers who place God's will before their own have been burning lamps of science among men of learning; they employ their wisdom for the general good of their countrymen.

They prove themselves worthy examples of

Digitized by Google

honest and virtuous endeavor, and with small hope of reward give their lives to the increase of public good. And in their wisdom deliver just ordinances to the people, setting the palm of peace among the nations; thus they attain the highest pinnacle of the mountain of glory and of honor. Likewise the learned and famous ulama,[1] the repository of sound doctrine, and the wielders of the strong handle of piety and of the fear of God, place their trust in him, and hold fast to the garment of salvation; and the mirror of their thoughts is adorned with the signs of sublime realities and reflect the sum of universal knowledge. So they are diligently engaged, both night and day, in acquiring useful sciences and teaching and educating their chosen pupils.

The hidden treasures of kings cannot be compared with a drop of the water of science; nor with the smallest cup of their learning; and the heaped-up talents of gold and silver cannot be equal to the solution of the least abstruse of their problems.

Those learned men consider the pleasures of foreign nations as the playthings of children, and account riches and worldly pomp the fit reward of the mean and ignorant. Like the birds, they are content with a few grains for their sustenance, but the melody of their wisdom and their knowledge

[1] The body of the divines who are called upon to give their advice on religious questions.

Digitized by Google

will excite the astonishment of the intelligent and discerning among the sages of the world. Such are those rulers who are benevolent and wise, whose dignity and real happiness lie in the well-being of the public, whose ambition consists in diligently searching after such things as will justify them and their wealth, and will bring happiness and peace upon the people.

There can be no true satisfaction or contentment apart from the general prosperity.

Consider for example, the great men of a country, those who are wise and pure in heart, and notable for the excellence of their natural perception, and all other qualities leading to happiness in this world and the next, in honor, dignity and nobility;—does their greatness consist in their true and faithful service, their zeal and anxiety to do God's will, to please the king and to satisfy the hearts of the people? Or, in luxury of habit, in extravagant feasting, and in every kind of sensual pleasure, leading to the ultimate ruination of the people; injury to the hearts of the servants of God; their banishment from the Court of the Almighty; in estrangement from the potent majesty of the king; and in the hatred and scorn of their countrymen?

Verily, the decayed bones in the sepulchre are better than the like of these! Of what use are they —they who have not tasted the heavenly manna of

Digitized by Google

virtue, nor drunk of the pure spring of human kindness?

* * * * * *

It is clearly shown that the establishment of such assemblies will lead to justice and piety. Of this there can be no doubt.

But what can bring the purposes of the ministers and elected members to light? If they be men of sincere intention, good results and unexpected improvements should certainly follow, as a natural consequence; but if, on the other hand, they are unworthy of their trust, evil results must ensue.

"A thousand clouds gather together, but occasion no damage. Should they however burst forth, what destruction would be caused!"

However, by the details which we have already explained, we have endeavored to show that the glory, happiness, honor and peace of man do not consist in personal wealth, but on the contrary, in sublimity of soul, nobility of resolution, extension of education and in the solution of the problem of life.

"Upon me is a garment which the merchant would refuse at a farthing. Yet therein lies a soul unsuspected of the onlookers."

"Verily in the souls of men lieth their only glory!"

Digitized by Google

It seems to me, right, that the election of temporary members of the assemblies of the kingdom should depend upon the choice and satisfaction of the public, for members elected by the people are pledged to carry out their will, and to follow out their instructions.

Consequently they are careful to administer impartial justice, and to live according to true religion, so that they may establish a good reputation and keep their dignity in the eyes of the people.

But it must not be imagined from these words, that it is intended to condemn riches or to belaud poverty and need.

On the contrary, riches are earned by personal effort with divine assistance, in various trades, agriculture and the arts, and, rightly administered, are justly deserving of praise, forasmuch as if a wise and discerning man acquire them, they become a ready means of benefit to the state.

And than this, there is no greater ambition, for it is, and has been, of all things, the most acceptable in God's sight.

A man should be a constant source of well-being and contentment, and a ready help to prosperity for multitudes of people.

Yea verily, wealth and riches are worthy of praise if they be justly partitioned amongst the nation, but if some few be possessed of great riches, and many be reduced to poverty, then is the rich man's gold deprived of all its worth.

Digitized by Google

But if great wealth be employed in the propagation of science, in the establishment of schools and colleges, in the nurture of arts, and in the education of orphans and the care of the needy, in brief, for the public benefit, then shall its possessor be accounted great, both in the sight of God and man.

But those persons who believe that these innovations and new principles are in all ways contrary to the will and the precepts of the Omnipotent God, and declare that "they are opposed to the basis of strong [1] law and to the character of the beloved of the Lord of both worlds," should ponder and ascertain wherein lies the inconsistency between this teaching and the doctrines of revealed religion. Is it because this knowledge must be acquired from other nations, and because "Whosoever imitateth a foreign people is one of them"?

Firstly, these reforms affect only such matters as civilization, science, arts and natural philosophy, the means of progress in trades and the ruling of the affairs of the kingdom, and are in no way connected with questions of spiritual significance or the fundamentals of religion. And if it should be said that "in these things also, it is unlawful to acquire knowledge from the stranger"; surely this contention must betray the ignorance of the speaker? Have they then forgotten the famous

[1] Religious.

Digitized by Google

Hadeeth, "Search after knowledge, even though it be in China"?

It is well known that the Chinese were regarded as[1] among the meanest of men in the sight of the Almighty God, for verily they were worshippers of idols, and neglected to serve the Omniscient; while the people of Europe were considered as the people of the Book,[2] for they confess and acknowledge the Giver of all good things.

Is it not written in the blessed verses: "And thou shalt find the Christians to be the nearest of them in friendship for the true believer; for amongst them there are priests and anchorites to whom arrogance is strange"[3]?

Therefore is it lawful and agreeable to seek after the science of the Christians. For how could it be accepted to be taught science by idolaters and at the same time be odious to the Court of Almighty God that we should submit to be taught by the people of the Book?

It is thus that a confederation of infidels, the Abu Sofyan, the children of Kanana, the children of Kahtan, the children of Quraizat and the Jews,

[1] By the early fanatic Mussulmans.

[2] Ahlu'l-Kitab, a name given by Muhammad to the Jews and the Christians who have also received from God a written Law.

[3] Quotation from the *Quran*.

Digitized by Google

together with all the tribes of Quraish [1] rose in an endeavor to extinguish the divine Lamp which had been kindled in Yathreb. And at that time the winds of temptation and trial blew vigorously from all sides, as it is written: "Do our people then think, that having said 'We believe,' that that is sufficient, and that their faith need not be proved by sorrow and affliction?" [2]

The believers indeed were few, and their enemies gathered themselves together, seeking to darken the sun of the true Orient by the dust of their oppressions. Then it was, that his holiness Salman [3] rose up in the presence of the Prophet saying: "Yonder in Persia do they dig trenches as a bulwark about their cities, and verily they have proved a safe defense."

Did he,[4] who was the source of universal wisdom and divine knowledge, forbid them, declaring that this was the custom of polytheistic infidels?

Did he affirm it unlawful for the worshippers of the great Unity to adopt the fruit of their invention? [5] Did he not rather command his followers to set about the digging of trenches? Did he himself not take up tools and go to the help of his comrades?

[1] Names of the different tribes who were fighting against Muhammad.

[2] *Quran.*

[3] One of the most devoted disciples of the Prophet.

[4] Muhammad.

[5] *i.e.* of the Persians, who had not yet been converted to Islam.

Digitized by Google

Moreover in books of the most learned ulama, and of the greatest historians of Islam, is it not written that after the great Luminary[1] had appeared on the horizon of Hidjaz, the whole number of the people were enlightened by the rays of its brightness, and that a universal change came over the habitable world through the revelation of a new and divine Law? These sacred ordinances enjoined the observance of many customs familiar to the heathen, as, for example, the holding sacred of certain months, the abstinence from the flesh of swine, the retention of the lunar months and of their ancient names, and the forfeit of the right hand as a punishment for theft.

As it is written: "The heathens had customs the Law of Islam confirmed: they used to accomplish the pilgrimage to the Kaaba, to perform the ceremonies of purification, to make the circumambulations, the visitations, the halts . . . every three years they used to add a month to the lunar year . . . ," etc.

God forbid we should imagine that because the commandments of the Law exhibit some resemblance to the custom of the heathen, who are the reproach in the eyes of God, any evil is occasioned! Or that (God forbid!) the Bountiful Lord has commanded us to model our opinions upon those of the infidels! Infinite is the wisdom of God! Was it not possible for his Omnipotence

[1] Muhammad.

Digitized by Google

to vouchsafe commandments which should in no way resemble the law of heathen nations? Yes indeed, but this was the purpose of his wisdom: That the people should be freed from the bonds of superstition, and that these present questions should not be the cause of disturbance amongst them.

Some, ignorant of the truths of the divine Book, and having no knowledge of history, will assert that "These customs have their origin in the precepts of Abraham (on whom be peace!) and have remained among the heathen from all time, and been cherished by them." And in proof thereof, maybe, they will cite this verse:

"Follow the religion of Abraham, which is a good one."

But verily, it is written in all the books of Islam, that to respect the observance of the sacred months,[1] and to maintain the custom of calculation by the phases of the moon, and to uphold the law respecting the cutting of the hand of the thief, are not founded upon the precepts of his highness Abraham (upon whom be peace!). Now the history of Abraham, is it not written in the Book of the holy Bible which existeth unto this day?

It may, however, be advanced that the Bible itself has been altered and its text corrupted.

But the question of these alterations is fully discussed in the books of commentaries. To enter

[1] Zu'lqa'dah, Zul'hadja, Muharram, Rajab.

Digitized by Google

upon it here would take us away from the subject matter of this treatise and consequently we shall dwell upon it here no further.

It is written in many excellent works: "Learn from the birds of the air, and find wisdom in their manner of being." [1] If then it be lawful to acquire wisdom from dumb creatures, how much better is it to obtain knowledge from the chosen of foreign nations which are endowed with a rational soul, with judgment and discrimination?

If you consider that in the animal kingdom the different qualities come from God, how then could it be upheld that to acquire civilization, science and knowledge from foreign nations is not of God?

"Is there any other creator besides Allah? Answer: No, by Allah."

Likewise, the great ulama and the learned doctors of the law mastered sciences which had their origin in the labors of the great Aristotle and of other sages of ancient Greece. And they have acquired from their works much knowledge of medicine and mathematics and have accounted the study of their works a means of attaining great superiority and the most excellent satisfaction.

Thus all the ulama both learned and inculcated the science of logic; although they reckoned one of the polytheists [2] as its founder; it hath

[1] A famous Hadeeth. Vide Matth. vi. 26: "Behold the birds of the heaven . . ." etc.

[2] Zenon of Elee, who lived 500 years before Christ.

Digitized by Google

abundantly been made manifest that if a man have a deep knowledge of various branches of science, and be not perfectly trained in logic, the result of his industry, and his judgment upon important questions, cannot be thoroughly trusted.

Therefore it is as clear as noonday that it is lawful to acquire knowledge and the art of right government from foreign nations, so the public attention may be directed to these important questions and that these methods of reform may be made publicly known, and that, in a short period, by God's help, the prudent nation may become chief amongst peoples.

O men of understanding, reflect with wisdom and discernment! Can our ancient and obsolete muskets be successfully matched against Martini rifles and Krupp cannons?

Should any man maintain, that our old-fashioned arms are best and most suitable for us, and that there is no need to procure those lately invented in foreign countries, would the veriest child pay heed to his words?

Or if he were to say, "Until the present time we have been accustomed to transport our goods from one country to another on the backs of animals, and we have not hitherto needed, nor do we now need, railroads, and why therefore should we conform to the practices of other peoples."

Would any man of sense take notice of such babblings? No indeed, unless there were some

Digitized by Google

hatred hidden in his heart, causing him to deny what is abundantly made manifest.

These foreign kingdoms, notwithstanding their high attainments in science, education and industry, acquire knowledge from one another. Why then does the realm of Persia, which is in such a needy condition, remain content to be useless and without power?

The great doctors of the Law who have their way in the right path, and know the mysteries of divine wisdom, and the truths of God's holy Books, whose hearts are adorned with the ornament of piety, and the freshness of whose countenance is illumined by the light of Providence; they, indeed, are familiar with our needs, and are acquainted with the requirements of this present age; they, indeed, zealously encourage and stimulate the desire of the people for civilization and knowledge.

"Are they equal who know and who do not know? And can the darkness be compared with the light?"

Wise men are as guiding lamps to the people. They are the stars of felicity in the horizon of tribes and nations; they are the Salsabil[1] of life for the souls dead in ignorance and folly; and for those who wander and thirst in the wilderness of want they are a fresh spring of cooling water. They, indeed, have the truths of God's glorious

[1] A river in Paradise.

Digitized by Google

Books, and are a living proof of the unity of the divine Spirit; to the diseased body of the world, they are skilful physicians, and are a true antidote to the poisoned soul of mankind. They are as an impregnable fortress protecting the world of humanity, and a sure refuge for those disturbed and disquieted by the forces of darkness and ignorance.

"Knowledge is like unto the lamp lighted by God in the heart of him whom he chooseth."

But the Cherisher of mankind hath created signs and indications for all things, and hath appointed a touchstone to test their merit. Thus must the theologian be endowed with every spiritual and mental perfection, and possess grace of manner, brightness of disposition, sincerity of intention, understanding, knowledge, wit, wisdom, intellect, sobriety, true piety, and, above all, the fear of God within his heart. For if the candle be placed on high and be not lighted, it is as the branches of a hollow palm, or as a mighty pile of faggots to which no brand hath been applied.

"Coquetry and affection may make a face to become like a rose
She who cannot achieve this result, should not give rein to her humor.
How unseemly are the results of coyness in a hideous face.
Hard it is to suffer pain in a sightless eye."

It is written in the indubitable Narrative[1]: "If one of the ulama be found to be the careful guardian to his soul, a follower of the laws of his

[1] *i.e.* the collection of authentic Hadeeths.

Digitized by Google

religion, a stout opponent of his own fleshly lust, and an obedient follower of the Lord's commandments, then, indeed, it is right that he should become a shepherd of the sheep and that the people should follow his direction."

As these inspired words contain the whole essence of the sound knowledge, I will endeavor to give here a brief explanation of sacred writ. And whosoever does not follow out the divine ordinances contained therein, and does not himself embody the result of their teaching, he, indeed, is deprived of divine communion, and of the true sources of sound knowledge, and shall no longer be worthy to expound the law to believers in the divine Unity of God.

The first condition which is required from the holy ulama is: "A guardian to his soul." It is evident that these words do not refer to afflictions and troubles of the world, for verily all the prophets and saints of God were subject to grievous tribulation; and amongst all nations they became the butt for the arrows of trouble and adversity. And having devoted themselves to the general welfare, marched joyously to the place of martyrdom. The perfection of their spiritual attainment clothed the world in a new robe of essential virtue and goodness. The true meaning of the words "A guardian to his soul" is a defense from external and internal defects, and the attainment of enduring and exalted spiritual condition.

Digitized by Google

The characteristics most necessary to perfection, are, knowledge and virtue, and to attain to this stage, an acquaintance with the divine precepts, contained in the *Quran* for the guidance of the polity of mankind, and a familarity with the other heavenly Books and of the true paths leading nations to advancement and civilization, are indispensable.

A just appreciation of the conditions of life, and of the customs prevalent amongst foreign peoples, a proper comprehension of the sciences and arts pertaining to this age, and a diligent study of historical records, are also requisite.

For, if the theologians be ignorant of the holy Books and religions of other nations, of the physiology, and of the judicial laws, politics, arts and educational methods of former centuries and peoples, they will remain powerless at the most critical moment, having no precedent to guide their action. And this indeed would be contrary to perfection.

And if, for example, a learned theologian, engaged in controversy with a member of a Christian sect, be unacquainted with the glorious melodies of the *Gospel,* how can he discuss with him? To the Christian, the most transcedent verities would not be acceptable, only upon the authority of the divine *Forqan;*[1] but if our ulama would closely study the religious Books of other peoples, they would be far apter in argument than the divines

[1] Another name of the *Quran,* meaning the Distinction.

Digitized by Google

of other nations of the Book.[1] Then could our doctors confute their adversaries out of their own mouths, and out of the mouths of their prophets; and they would have no alternative but to believe.

When a certain Catholic chief was honored and received by the sun of the sky of learning, that luminary of the heights of guidance and assurance, the Imam Reza (upon whom be peace!), his holiness deigned to use such argument and proofs as were familiar to the Catholic chief so that he was convinced in all things and went wondering away, confessing the greatness of his host.

Moreover two things are most urgently necessary to the political realm:

1. The Legislative Power.
2. The Executive Power.

The center of the executive power is the government, and the legislative power lies in the hands of thoughtful and wise men. On the other hand, if these strong pillars and firm foundations are not complete and comprehensive, how can it be supposed that there will be safety and salvation for the nation?

But as, in these latter days, such excellency is rare, the government and the whole body of the nation are in sore need of just and discerning direction. Thus it is of the utmost importance to establish an assembly of learned men, who, being

[1] Because beside the *Old* and the *New Testaments*, he draws also his arguments from the *Quran*.

Digitized by Google

proficient in the different sciences and capable of dealing with all the present and future requirements will settle the questions in accordance with forbearance and firmness.

Hitherto there has been no properly appointed court of law, and the ulama administer justice, each according to their own ideas. It may be, that in the process of a lawsuit, one of the ulama may give judgment for the plaintiff, and that another would decide in favor of the defendant; nay, furthermore, varying judgments may be delivered in identical cases by the same mujtaheed,[1] because the case first appears in one light, and then in another; and there can be no doubt that such cases do cause an infinity of confusion, and reflect disadvantageously upon the principles of the whole people.

Neither the plaintiff nor the defendant is ever convinced of the unworthiness of his cause, and they are ever expecting to obtain redress in a second judgment which should reverse the first. Thus they spend their time in litigation, and their precious lives are wasted in contention and enmity, to the exclusion of good works and to the detriment of their private affairs; indeed they are like the dead, who are unable to render service to their neighbors or to the commonwealth. But were there a well-ordered judicial authority in the land, they would not put all their hopes in a second trial, and

[1] A member of the Shiite clergy.

Digitized by Google

consequently they would occupy themselves about their own affairs.

As upon this question, the peace and comfort of the people of the realm, appear largely to depend, the divines,[1] who are familiar with all matters of jurisprudence, should make an earnest endeavor to arrange the satisfactory settlement of suits at law. Their resolutions should be printed and circulated by the King's commands, and distributed in all the provinces, in order that the people should learn them and obey them. This, indeed, is a measure of vital importance to the country.

The second characteristic of progress and self-perfecting consists in the observance of justice and righteousness.

There must be no respecting of personal advantage and no seeking after personal profit, but, without regarding anyone, a man must keep the just laws and recognize himself as a member of the body of God's people. Except, so far as concerns his spiritual growth, he should not keep aloof from the people, but should reckon the common good, his own. In short, he should think of the whole people as one man, and of himself merely as one of the members of that body.

There should be no deversity of opinion in the

[1] It is only in granting the Constitution in 1907 that the Shah Muzaffaru'd Din created regular tribunals apart from the mujtaheed.

Digitized by Google

body, but all the members should have the same care for one another's welfare, knowing from the beginning, for certain, that, if one member is suffering, it may be a cause of suffering to the whole body.

The third characteristic of progress consists in the earnest and sincere development of public education, in the teaching of all the useful sciences and in encouraging the people to adopt the modern inventions, in extending the spheres of the arts and commerce, and in endeavoring to induce them to adopt the methods by which the country may be enriched. For the majority of the people are ignorant of those valuable and most important remedies which act as an immediate cure for long-standing disease of the body politic.

A most learned and wise ulama will have to arise and preach most sincerely in God's name, and scatter abroad exhortations that the eyes of men may become brightened with the Kohl [1] of the sight of sciences.

When, as today, it is imagined that those who are believers in God, confessing their faith in the divine words, Prophets, Books, and commandments, and who are the manifestations of the fear of God, ought to lay by their powers, keep aloof from business, and spend their time in vanity and laziness, in order to be accounted of those who

[1] Antimony reduced to a fine powder and used in the East for strengthening the eyes.

Digitized by Google

have forsaken this world and what is therein, and have turned their hearts to the next—in the sight of God: thus they keep themselves apart from their fellow-creatures and are brought nigh to the Truth. As an inquiry into this point would take up much space, and would be beyond the limits of this book, I propose to enter fully into it on another occasion, and will therefore leave the question for the present.

The other characterstics of progress are, the fear of God, the love of God in the love of his servants, mankind in general, long-suffering, steadfastness, truth, compassion, generosity, bravery, boldness, perserverance, activity, purity, cheerfulness, modesty, zeal, resolution, highmindedness, the cherishing of righteousness and similar feelings; and the lack of these humane characteristics and good feelings is a terrible deficiency.

The actual value of each of these qualities would take us too long to explain in the present volume.

The second condition required in this holy sentence is: "An observer of his religion."

It is apparent that the meaning of this blessed phrase or text has been not confined to the discovery of precepts which were previously concealed from the common knowledge, to the attending of religious services, the avoidance of being either great or lowly, and the keeping of the judicial laws—whereby the religion of God is ob-

Digitized by Google

served and protected; but the meaning is the preservation of the whole people from harm, the exalting of God's words, the increase of the number of the truly religious, the cherishing of the divine religion, its victory and triumph over the other religions, and its serious utilization as a means of good.

If the ulama of Islam had commenced aright, all the nations of the world would by this time have entered under the shadow of the Word of Unity.

And the resplendently glorious saying, "It is he who has sent his Apostle with guidance and true religion, that he may make it appear superior to every other religion, although the idolators be adverse thereto," would glow as the sun in the horizon of the center of being and would shine forth over the whole world.

Now, Martin Luther was a great founder of religion. In the fifteenth century he arose. At one time he was a member of the Church of Rome and had been sent to the Vatican. Later he became the founder of the Protestant faith. He disagreed on several questions with the Pope, such as the prevalence of celibate monks, the worshipping of the images of the Apostles and of the ancient Christian fathers, the rites and religious ceremonies which had been instituted over and above the commandments of the *Gospel*.

Although at that period the power and author-

Digitized by Google

ity of the Popes were such, that all the kings of Europe would tremble and grow anxious at their displeasure, and although all matters of importance in Europe were under the control of their right hand and power; nevertheless, as Luther had the right and true opinions in regard to the questions referred to, and adopted the means necessary to make his views prevail, in the period of a little more than four centuries which have elapsed since then, most of the people of America, four-fifths of Germany, England, and large numbers in Austria—to be brief, about 125,000,000 of the sects of Christianity have accepted the Protestant faith. And they are still earnestly trying to spread it more and more. Now, on the coast of East Africa, they have outwardly professed to be endeavoring to emancipate the Soudanese and negroes and have established schools among them, and are engaged in teaching and civilizing the savage tribes of Africa; but true inward purpose is to convert the Islamic negro tribes to Protestantism. Yea, verily, whilst everyone else is busied in enhancing and exalting the renown of his nation, we are still slumbering in our sleep of idle negligence!

Consider only this, what great things have been done by Luther and by the enthusiasm of the followers of his faith!

Now if the people of God, who are the manifestations of divine protection and the dawning-

Digitized by Google

places of his gifts, would strive earnestly and with whole-hearted zeal, trusting in God and wholly weaned from everything except him, and would adopt in this spirit the proper methods of propagating their religion, if they would become alert and active, undoubtedly the light of the visible Truth would be shed over all the regions of the globe. But alas! Whereas there are some people who do not know anything of the truth of this, the pulse of the world is not in their hands to feel, and they have no idea what is the great real antidote to the chronic disease of false opinions. They think that the prevalence of a religion is ensured only by the sword, and they try to prove it by the Hadeeth, "I am a Prophet by the sword," whilst truly if they gave due consideration to the subject, they would quickly find out, that, at the present time, the sword cannot become an instrument for the spreading of any religion, but, on the contrary, it would be a means of horrifying and frightening the hearts of men.

According to the blessed Law it is unlawful to compel the people of the Book to accept Islam by force, while it is the lawful duty of every believer in the Unity of God to be a guidance to the rest of the world.

The Hadeeths, "I am a Prophet by the sword," "I command you to kill the people until they shall confess," "There is no God but God," are uttered concerning ignorant polytheists, who, on account

Digitized by Google

of their extreme barbarism and ignorance, were fallen entirely from the state of humanity. For truly a belief which is extorted by the stroke of the sword is sure to be most untrustworthy, and soon changes into unbelief and error.

Thus it happened with the tribes dwelling around the enlightened city of Madina, soon after the ascent of the highest sun of Prophethood to the seat of Truth, near the All-powerful King, God the Almighty, those tribes returned again to heathenism and became apostates.

Consider again the period when the holy breath of the Spirit of God (Jesus Christ) perfumed the land of Palestine, Galilee, the banks of the river of Jordan, and the regions round about Jerusalem when the glorious melodies of the *Gospel* reached the ears of the spiritually-minded. At that time, every nation and people in Asia, Europe, Africa, America and Oceania (the isles of the ocean), except the Jewish nation, who were believers in the divine Unity, were fire worshippers and idolaters, and neglectful of the call of the Judgment Day.

By the mission of the holy One, the excellent, pure, life-giving breath of eternal truth was bestowed on the dwellers in those parts, by the inspiration of God, and the radical basis of the Law of Jesus was established, which was, at that time, the medicine and immediate cure for the diseased bodies of humanity.

Digitized by Google

Although in the lifetime of that holy One, there were a few souls who believed in God, but there were really only twelve men who believed—the apostles (among whom was Judas Iscariot who became an apostate—so that there remained eleven apostles), and some women. However, after the ascension of the holy One to the horizon of glory, this small number of men and women were chosen by reason of their spiritual ability and holy living and by the divine power and inspiration of the breath of Christ, for the dignity of guiding to the truth the whole people of the earth.

The heathen nations and the Jews of that generation arose with the intention of extinguishing by their power and efforts the divine Light which was kindled in the lamp of the land of Jerusalem. As it is written: "They purpose to extinguish the Light of God with their mouths, but God has resolved to perfect his Light, although the infidels be averse thereto and regard it as impossible."

So they martyred each one of those holy persons, with the most excruciating torments and tortures. Some of them were cut to pieces with knives, others were cast into a fiery furnace to be burnt. Some of the disciples of those holy men were buried alive, after being tortured with all manners of racking instrument. In spite of all these grievous tortures and the widespread popular prejudice and hostility excited against them, they never ceased preaching God's religion, and

Digitized by Google

they did this without drawing the sword from its sheath, or injuring anyone in the slightest.

The followers of Jesus Christ have, at last, spread so widely over the world, that in the continents of Europe and America no impression of any other religion has remained. And in Asia, Africa, and in the Isles of the Ocean, there are today a great multitude who have entered into the shadow of the *Gospel.*

These facts are a clear manifest proof that the dissemination of the divine religion is owing to the perfecting of the individual, to goodness of disposition, to acceptable habits or customs and deeds proceeding from a spiritual mind.

If an individual of good disposition believes in God, he would be accepted in the Threshold of Unity. For his soul has been purified from all personal taints and the greed of self-interest, and has taken refuge under the protecting care of God. He will be characterized among men by the qualities of trustfulness, truthfulness, temperance, the cherishing of righteousness, zealousness, fidelity, piety and holiness.

Thus will the principal purpose of the revelation of holy, heavenly laws be attained—that is to say, the civilizing of this world, the purifying of the characters of men and the realization of the happiness of the next world. If it be attempted to attain to these, at the point of the sword, men

Digitized by Google

may outwardly become believers, but inwardly they will be deceivers.

Here we may tell a story which nobody will read without receiving instruction therefrom.

It is written in Arabian history, before the call of the Prophet (on whom be peace!), that Naaman-Ibn-Mazar-Lakomi, one of the heathen Arab kings, whose throne was in the city of Hera, one day took so much strong drink that he knew not what he was doing and his intellect was overclouded. In this condition of drunkenness and unsciousness he gave orders that Khaled-Ibn-Muzlel, and Omar-Ibn-Mas'oud-Kaldah, two of his favorite and intimate friends, should be put to death.

When he recovered from his drunken fit, he inquired after them and was told what had occurred, that he had commanded them to be killed. He grew burdened with extreme sorrow and his heart was filled with blood,[1] and because of the great love and friendship he had had for them, he ordered two great buildings to be erected on the site of their graves.

And in commemoration of them, he set apart two days in the year, one was called the "day of wrath" and the other the "day of grace," when he would come with great pomp and sit between the

[1] A Persian idiom meaning "bursting with grief."

Digitized by Google

two buildings. On the day of wrath no one who came within the range of his eye could escape with his life, and he was put to death. On the day of grace, however, anyone who arrived or came on a mission to the king would have favors and gifts conferred upon him. This law and custom was strictly observed.

One day the King, riding a horse called by name "Favorite," started for the country, with the object of hunting. Suddenly he sighted an antelope in the distance, and pursuing it, urged on his horse to its fullest speed, until he was separated from the rest of his company and escort.

The sun was setting and he failed to secure his quarry.

Turning back in disappointment, he unexpectedly saw a tent afar off, and made up his mind to betake himself there. When he reached the door of the tent, he asked, "Do you seek a guest?"

The master of the tent, whose name was Hanzalah Ibn Abi Ghofra of Taey, answered ,"Yes," and going forth to meet him, helped him to alight and received him gladly, saying to his wife, "This, as anyone may see, is a noble personage. Prepare a feast, do your utmost in the way of entertainment, get ready the best you have."

His wife replied: "We have one ewe, kill it; whilst I bring the little flour I have kept against such an occasion."

Then Hanzalah milked the ewe, brought a

Digitized by Google

bowl full of milk and presented it to the guest; after which he killed the sheep, and prepared a savory morsel for him.

Naaman spent the night in great comfort, through the courtesy, love and self-denial of his host, Hanzalah.

When the dawn broke, Naaman thought of his return and called Hanzalah saying, "You have showed the truest hospitality and the highest courtesy in your entertainment of me. I am Naaman-Ibn-Manzar-Lakhmi. I shall be pleased to see you and reward your kind hospitality."

A long period went by, when a great famine befell the district of Taey, and Hanzalah was reduced to great extremity.

He decided to seek the presence of the king, and by a strange chance appeared before Naaman on the day of wrath.

The king was extremely distressed and began to reproach him: "Why have you sought the presence of your friend on this day of wrath, which is a fatal day? If today my eyes were to fall on my only-begotten son Kabus, he could not escape with his life. Now ask what you will!"

Hanzalah answered, "I know not about the day of wrath; but earthly things are only for life and the living; and as at this hour it is appointed that I should drink of a fatal cup, of what imaginable use to me can be all the good things of the earth?"

Digitized by Google

Naaman said, "There is no way of reversing the decree!"

Then Hanzalah pleaded, "Grant me a reprieve that I may return to my family and make my will; and on the day of wrath next year I will be present again before you."

Naaman required a surety from him, so that, if he broke his promise, the surety would be put to death in his stead.

Hanzalah looked anxiously round, seeking to find someone willing to be surety for him, until his eyes fell upon Shareek Ibn Amr Ibn Quais Shaibani, who was one of Naaman's servants; he uttered these lines in a stanza:

"O Shareek! O son of Amre,
May I perchance escape from death?
O brother of all the afflicted,
Be not in doubt regarding it;
O brother, the Naaman's trust is in thee.
It is the day to be surety for the Shaykh;
Son of Shaiban the generous;
The grace of the All-Provider makes the way easy."

Shareek answered, "O brother, I cannot summon up courage to risk my life."

The unfortunate Hanzalah was stupefied and amazed.

Then there stood forth a man called Quarad Ibn Ajdaa Kalbey, offering to become surety on the condition that if he did not deliver up Hanzalah on the day of wrath in the following year,

Digitized by Google

he would himself be ready to endure whatever the king might order to be done to him.

So the king made a present of five hundred camels to Hanzalah and sent him away.

On the day of wrath in the next year, when the true dawn rose from the horizon of the east, Naaman proceeded as usual with great pomp to the two buildings called Gharijan. He took with him Quarad, that he might be executed as the victim of his royal wrath.

The courtiers present entreated for a reprieve till the evening, so that Hanzalah might return; whilst the king's purpose was, for the sake of the love he bore him, to save Hanzalah from death by executing his surety.

However, he waited till towards the evening. When Quarad was stripped and his neck was about to be severed, suddenly a horseman was descried afar off galloping with the utmost speed. Naaman said to the executioner: "What are you tarrying for?" And his ministers rejoined: "Perhaps this horseman may be Hanzalah!"

When he approached they saw it was Hanzalah of Taey. Naaman was displeased at his coming and addressed him: "O fool! you that escaped the claws of death, why have you abandoned yourself to them again?"

Hanzalah answered: "Know, O king, that

Digitized by Google

faithfulness to my promise has made the deadly poison of death sweet to my taste!"

And Naaman answered: "What was the cause of thy faithfulness and thy design in keeping thy word?"

And Hanzalah replied: "I believe in the divine Unity of God, and in the Books which came from heaven!"

Then Naaman inquired of him: "What is the religion to which thou belongest?"

And Hanzalah answered: "I am quickened by the breath of Christ, and am walking in the right path, in the way of the Spirit of God (Jesus Christ)."

And Naaman said unto him: "Breathe the holy breath of the Spirit of God into my nostrils!"

Hanzalah took out the White Hand of Guidance[1] from the bosom of God's love promising the light of the *Gospel* on the eyes and judgment of those present.

When Hanzalah had chanted melodiously some divine verses from the verses of the *Gospel,* Naaman and all his ministers left their idols and their idolatry and became verily converted to the divine religion and steadfast therein, confessing it

[1] Moses, in order to show his power to the Israelites is said on one occasion to have withdrawn his right hand from his garment: it was white as snow, and the moon was reflected in it brightly. Therefore "to take out the white hand of Guidance" means to show a miraculous power by which to guide people. Cf. *Quran* xxviii. 32.

Digitized by Google

was a hundred thousand pities they had not known until then of such an infinite mercy and had been so long deprived of this unutterable grace of God!

They immediately destroyed the two buildings, and repenting of their cruelty and oppression established straightway the foundations of justice and right judgment.

Now reflect on this wonder, that a peasant, an unknown individual and apparently a man of naught, because he had the characteristics of the sincere and upright, saved such a zealous king and a great multitude of people with him from the darkness of the evening of errors, leading them to the Light of the Morning of Guidance! Saving them from the desert of perdition and idolatry and bringing them to the coast of the sea of the divine Unity! He was the instrument of the abolition of a savage custom, which was a disgrace to humanity and destructive of the roots of civilization.

There is urgent need of widespread thought and study; and much wisdom and discrimination are required. Alas! my heart swells within me and is full of grief, because it cannot see that the people are devoting their care and energy to what today is worthy of both.

The Sun of Truth is shining over the whole earth, and we still remain afflicted by the darkness of our selfishness. The great Ocean is surging

Digitized by Google

about us, and we are scorched, exhausted and enfeebled by thirst. The divine Manna is falling from the Heaven of Unity, and yet we wander astray and are bewildered how to escape famine!

"I am silent, between speaking and weeping!"

One of the chief hindrances to the accepting of the divine Religion[1] by the peoples of other religions is the prevailing bigotry and heathenish obstinacy. Consider, for instance, that the divine call to the Prophet was: "Invite men to the path of thy Lord with wisdom and mild exhortation; and discuss with them in the kindest way."[2] So he was ordered to be humble and gentle to all. Accordingly that "Blessed Tree of Prophecy[3] of neither the East nor the West" cast the shade of the infinite bounty over the heads of all the people of the world and went his ways with the greatest benignity of heart and graciousness of manners.

Likewise the holy prophets, Moses and Aaron (upon both of whom be peace!), were commanded when addressing and reproving Pharaoh their master, "Speak to him soft words, haply he may understand and believe."

Notwithstanding the fame of the noble prophets and saints, which if they were sincerely imitated would in every respect be a speedy means of bringing perfect goodness into humanity, some

[1] *i.e.* Bahaism.
[2] *Quran.*
[3] Muhammad.

Digitized by Google

persons entirely disregard the example of such good feelings and extraordinary benevolence. They are far removed from understanding the essence of the sacred Books of God, and avoid associating with persons of other religions, and they never observe the ancient courtesies of ceremonial usage, and hold it unlawful to do so.

With such a lack of intimacy and kindly intercourse, how can it be possible to guide a soul from the mortal darkness of negation, and illumine him with the bright morning of authority? Or to stimulate and encourage a man to ascend from the depths of ignorance and obstinacy to the loftiest horizon of the knowledge of God, and salvation from ignorance?

Now let us reflect with the eyes of judgment that if Hanzalah had not behaved with perfect love and sincerity, kindness and hospitality, towards Naaman Ibn Manzar, he could never possibly have become the instrument of the guidance and adherence of that king and that great multitude of polytheists to faith in the Unity of God.

Even as avoiding and shunning the company of people and being harsh with them are the sure means of filling them with fear, so are love, kindliness, humility and gentleness the truest method of binding people's souls and attracting their hearts. If one of the believers in monotheism were during his association with a person of another faith to show signs of repulsion, uttering with his lips the

Digitized by Google

terrible words that uncleanness prevented his intercourse with him; verily, that foreign person would be so grieved and sad at his words, that even if he were to see the splitting of the moon,[1] he would never draw nigh to the Truth. The consequence of this attitude will be that if there exist in the heart of the person mentioned, some little striving towards God, he will repent of that also, and will flee altogether from the shore of the Sea of Faith and seek refuge in the wilderness of indifference and vanity. And when he arrives in his own country he will put abroad all these things in the newspapers and otherwise make them public, and declare that the nation in question was lacking extremely in the ordinary qualities of humanity.

Now, if, inspired by the Stars of Heaven of Unity, we were to meditate a little upon the verses and explanations of the *Quran* and the authoritative Books, it would become manifest and proved, that a soul which is characterized by the qualities of faith and endowed with spiritual morals, shall become a manifestation of the wide mercy of God to all creatures, and shall be an Orient of the divine gifts to all beings. For, the sacred qualities of the people of Faith are justice, judgment, long-suffering, patience, kindliness, faithfulness, sincerity, fidelity, love, benevolence, zeal, the protection of others, and humanity.

So that if an individual were really pure and

[1] A miracle attributed to Muhammad.

Digitized by Google

holy, he would use those means which would attract the heart of all the nations of the world, and, by the attributes of God, he would draw all the world to the right path and give them to taste of the Kawthar[1] of eternal life.

Nowadays, alas, we have closed our eyes to all such good movements, sacrificing the eternal happiness of mankind to our own temporal interests, and, counting heathenish obstinacy as the proper mode by which to secure our supremacy, we are not even satisfied with that, but are even endeavoring to bring contempt and ruin upon one another.

When we want to exhibit our knowledge, either of abstruse subjects, or of moderation, or of piety and the fear of God, we commence by reproaching and abusing this one and that one, saying: "So-and-so's dogma is founded on false belief; So-and-so's acts leave much to be desired; Zaid's religious worship is too shallow and Amr's life is weak from the religious standpoint; Somebody's ideas are similar to those of a European; Somebody's private life is inclined to be disreputable; X. Y. Z. have not been attending service and they show no hospitality; 'tis a pity that during this month the rich merchant . . . did not depart to the Everlasting Gardens (*i.e.* did not die), and no presents were offered to the Threshold of the Seat of Prophecy nor any alms for purification! Therefore, the

[1] A river in Paradise.

Digitized by Google

basis of our Law is destroyed, and there is no more power enduring in faith and piety!

"The world has fallen into error! energy is no longer shown to obtain for the clergy its share in the extortions of the governors. It is the end of the world! There are still some proprietors who have been left in possession of that which they had last year! In the town of X. there were eighty different judges, now their number is continually dwindling down, and there only remain five for the memory's sake. Each of them had the habit of giving 200 different judgments and contradictory fatwas [1] in a single day, and now they do not exceed fifty! A mass of the servants of Allah used to become distracted by it, and now they are at peace. In the past, one day the plaintiff was in the right, on the morrow the defendant. At present this established custom is also abandoned! What a religion of infidels! What an ignorance of idolaters! Unfortunate religion! Unfortunate belief! What a calamity! What a false godliness! What a depth of unbelief! Alas! alas! alas! where is faith? . . ."

O brethren in the faith; the time is the Time of the End, and the Day of Judgment is at hand! [2]

By such words as those I have instanced the minds of all the weak are confused and disturbed,

[1] Fatwas, verdicts.

[2] The Day of Judgment, the Time of the End, are expressions alluding, for a Bahai, to the time when a new Dispensation is given to the world.

Digitized by Google

and the hearts of those in poverty are terrified. Ignorant as they are of the true facts they do not realize the motives underlying such utterances and do not know that a hundred thousand personal objects are hidden under the veil of some person's superstitious words. Therefore they think the speaker has been stirred to his utterance by religious enthusiasm and the fear of God: whereas the speaker discerns his own especial ruin as resulting from the elevation of the masses, and his cries are accordingly! And as he beholds his own blindness when he perceives the good sight of other men, he begins studiously to groan and moan and lament.

But a discriminating eye is needed to observe, that, if such hearts were the veritable manifestations of the fear of God, their fragrant odor would assuredly have perfumed the world, even as doth the "musk of the soul."

Nothing can be verified in the world except only by word which needs to be followed by act.

"If not, these owls are falsely inspired;
They have learned only the notes of the white falcons;
If the *Quata*[1] should learn the notes of the hoopoe,
What becomes of the secret of the hoopoe and of the message of Sheba[2]?"

The divines, who have extracted from the Books of God's revelation the meanings, the under-

[1] A bird of the grouse family, which flies in large flocks and knows at a great distance where water is to be found. It makes a noise resembling "Quata! Quata!" whence it receives its name.

[2] The hoopoe was the messenger of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon.

Digitized by Google

standing and the infinite knowledge of the Deity, those whose hearts are the falling places of the inspirations of divine mystery, ought in very truth to be strenuous in asserting the superiority of God's resplendent people [1] over the others.

It behoves them to endeavor to grasp the methods which would probably become the means of the enlightenment of the nation. If any soul disregard such good purposes, surely he will not be accepted in the Court of God; he is like one of those who are full of blemishes whilst appearing perfect outwardly; he is poor in the extreme, though he may speak as from the abundance of riches. Thus it is said:

"If a blind man is idle and prone to anger:
Know him simply to be a morsel of flesh without eyes."

There is a great difference between an authentic man and an imitator of one; the former is David himself, the latter is merely like the tone of his voice.

Knowledge and wisdom, purity and faithfulness and freedom of the soul, have not been and are not judged by outward appearance and dress.

Remember well the sweet word which, when travelling, I once heard a great personage say: "Not every turban [2] can be an evidence of piety and knowledge; and not every cap an argument

[1] *i.e.* righteous people.

[2] The divines in Persia wear large turbans around their fez.

Digitized by Google

of ignorance and vice." Oh! many a cap has raised aloft the banner of knowledge; and oh! many a turban has brought to naught the judgment of the law!

The third requirement of the sacred words is: "Repelling his carnal desire." What glorious meanings are contained in it! It cannot be explained by mere unequal words and facile quotations.

It is the radical basis of all the praiseworthy qualities of humanity. Truly it is like a candle to the world, and the great foundation of the highest spiritual morality of mankind! It seems also to balance all characteristics and is the means whereby all the pleasing habits of human beings are kept in moderation.

For carnal desire is like a fire which has consumed a hundred thousand edifices built up by thoughtful sages; and even the sea of their sciences and arts has not been able to put out this blazing conflagration.

Oh! how many times it has happened that a soul, adorned with all the best characteristics of humanity and equipped with the ornaments of learning, has, by following after his carnal desire, removed his pleasing qualities from the constraining form of moderation and cast them into the world of excess, so that his sincere and honest intentions have been totally altered into vicious designs, and his qualities, far from appearing in their

Digitized by Google

proper light, were on the contrary diverted from the righteous straight path into the false and dangerous. Good morals are most acceptable and praiseworthy both in the sight of God and of his beloved who are near to him in his Court, and among those who are gifted with thought.

But there is this condition that the central aims of morals should be wisdom and knowledge, and its controlling idea should be true moderation.

If an explanation and discussion of this point were entered into in full, this book would be prolonged beyond the allowed length and the object of it would be lost in the mass of additional words. It must therefore be left to some future occasion.

However that may be, it should be stated that it is in the terrible ocean of carnal desire that all the peoples of Europe, notwithstanding their civilization and renown, are entirely overwhelmed and drowned, so that the outcome of their civilization is futile and fruitless.

No one must wonder at these statements, nor be afraid; for the chief, nay, the universal purpose of establishing by great laws the principles and foundations of all kinds of civilization, is the happiness of human beings; and human happiness lies in being near to the "Threshold of the Almighty God," and in the well-being of all persons, whether of high or low station. And the perfecting of the morals of humanity are the chief means towards those ends. The outward trappings of civilization,

Digitized by Google

without inward moral advancement, may be likened unto confused dreams which cannot be interpreted; and sensual enjoyment, apart from spiritual perfection, is like unto the mirage which he that is athirst believes to be water.

For, the fulfilling of the will and pleasure of God, and the advancement of the peace and well-being of the people cannot be perfectly achieved by external civilization alone. That the nations of Europe, indeed, have not yet progressed to any great height of moral civilization is manifest from the thoughts and acts of them all.

Reflect, for example, that the principal design of the various states today is to seize possession of each other's territories and to destroy one another, and that, although they are thus moved by intense inward hatred, they yet make a great show and profession of extreme friendliness, love and brotherhood. It is commonly said that "the king, who makes peace and loves reconciliation, is aiming more than those kings who have war in their hearts at the building of huge battleships and the increase of military forces, because reconciliation and peace cannot be attained without large armaments."

Under cloak of this, they are continually stirring, both by day and by night, with great efforts to make vast provision and preparation for war. The poor people, the poor subjects of these kings, those who gain their livelihood by the sweat of

Digitized by Google

their brow, by undergoing the hardships of their callings, are compelled to yield up the greater part of their hard-won earnings for this purpose, the accumulation of war materials and the training of men to be warlike. How many thousands of men there are who, instead of devoting themselves to the useful arts of peace, are daily employing their keenness and industry to the invention of new deadly instruments of war, which are to be the means of shedding the blood of their fellow-creatures with greater facility and profusion! Every day some such new and deadly weapon is being invented and, as the old ones cannot compete with the new, the European governments are constantly being obliged to abandon the older fashioned armaments and to make ready new ones. So, at the present time, the year 1292 of Hegira,[1] a new rifle has been invented in Germany and a new cannon in Austria, which can fire more effectively than the Martini rifle and the Krupp cannon, and are more deadly in the destruction of human life, and more rapid in their effects. The tremendous expense of equipment with these new weapons has to be borne by the unfortunate subjects of either state.

Now, what think you? Does this outward civilization, without the true inward civilization,

[1] *i.e.* A. D. 1875—that is to say more than thirty years before Persia obtained the grant of a Constitution. The text from which this present work has been translated was lithographed in Bombay in 1299—1882.

Digitized by Google

give rise to general peace and well-being, and is it likely to meet with the *divine* sanction and approval? Or is it the destroyer of the highest principles of humanity and of the foundations of happiness and prosperity?

In the years 1870-1871 of the Christian era, during the war between Germany and France, it is known that about 600,000 persons were killed and wounded in battle. How many families were utterly ruined! And how many towns, which in the evening were flourishing and prospering exceedingly, in the morning were razed to the ground and laid waste! How many little children became orphans, and how many others lost their foster-parents and guardians! How many fathers and mothers stricken in years had to look on whilst the fruit of their loins, their young sons, were struggling amidst the dust and blood and dying! How many wives were widows, bereft of their husbands and left without anyone to help them!

Who does not remember likewise the burning by the Germans of many of the grand and magnificent buildings in France, the destruction of libraries and the conflagration of military hospitals with all the sick and injured inmates? And the terrible occurrences that took place during the Commune in Paris, and the horrible fate that befell many of those who were opposed to it?

Who does not remember the long years of quarrelling and enmity between the religious

Digitized by Google

leader of the Roman Catholics and the German Government under Bismarck? And the ruin of cities and houses caused by the bloodshed during the Carlist War in Spain?

There are in short only too many catastrophes of this kind that might be mentioned which prove the deficiency of the European peoples in moral civilization.

As the present writer has no wish to cast reflections, he does not enter into further details, but it is clear enough that no man of thought and discernment would approve of a state of things in which such events could take place. How could it be possible to these peoples and nations among whom such terrible events, utterly opposed to all peaceful and human ideas, are happening to lay claim to complete and real civilization, especially as the only outcome of such inhumanity is conquest and temporary dominion, as its achievement and consequence is not lasting and enduring, and therefore is not worth the study and contemplation of thoughtful men?

In past centuries Germany conquered parts of France, likewise the French frequently established their rule over parts of Germany.

Is it just that those 600,000 poor people, God's servants, whom we have mentioned, should have been sacrificed for temporary results and external interests of this kind? In the name of God, no!

Digitized by Google

Even a child can understand the injury and injustice caused by such methods.

But when the heart, influenced by worldly desires, throws a hundred thousand veils over the eyes, both the eyes and the judgment grow blind; then hatred enters, the understanding becomes obscured, and a hundred veils coming from the heart blind the eyes.

Yea, the true civilization will raise its banner in the center of the world, when some noble kings of high ambitions, the bright suns of the world of humanitarian enthusiasm, shall, for the good and happiness of all the human race, step forth with firm resolution and keen strength of mind and hold a conference on the question of universal peace;[1] when keeping fast hold of the means of enforcing their views they shall establish a union of the states of the world, and conclude a definite treaty and strict alliance between them upon conditions not to be evaded. When the whole human race had been consulted through their representatives and invited to corroborate this treaty which verily would be a treaty of universal peace and would be accounted sacred by all the peoples of the earth, it would be the duty of the united powers of the world to see that this great treaty should be strengthened and should endure.

[1] It was only eleven years later that the first universal Conference of Peace was held at The Hague, which was followed by another one in 1908, and by the conclusion of several treaties of arbitration between different states.

Digitized by Google

In such a universal treaty the limits of the borders and boundaries of every state should be fixed, and the customs and laws of every government; all the agreements and the affairs of state and the arrangements between the various governments should be propounded and settled in due form; the size of the armaments for each government should likewise be definitely agreed upon, because if in the case of any state there were to be an increase in the preparation for war, it would be a cause of alarm to the other states. At any rate the bases of this powerful alliance should be so fixed that, if one of the states afterwards broke any of the articles of it, the rest of the nations of the world would rise up and destroy it. Yea, the whole human race would band its forces together to exterminate it.

If so great a remedy should be applied to the sick body of the world, it would certainly be the means of continually and permanently healing its illness by the inculcation of universal moderation. Reflect that, under such conditions of life, no government or kingdom would need to prepare and accumulate war materials, or would need to pay heed to the invention of new weapons of offence for the vexation and hurt of mankind. On the contrary, they would only require a few soldiers, as a means of assuring the safety of the state and punishing the wicked and rebellious and preventing the growth of civil sedition. Not more than these

Digitized by Google

few would be needed. In the first place, therefore, the servants of God—that is to say, all the inhabitants of a state—would be freed from bearing the burden of the tremendous expense of an army; in the second, the many persons who now devote their lives to the invention of fresh instruments of war would no longer waste their time upon such work, which but encourages ferocity and bloodthirstiness, and is repugnant to the universal ideal of humanity—on the contrary, they would then employ their natural gifts in the cause of the general well-being, and would contribute towards the peace and salvation of mankind. All the rulers of the world will then be settled on peaceful thrones amid the glory of a perfect civilization, and all the nations and peoples will rest in the cradle of peace and comfort.

Some persons who are ignorant of the world of true humanity and its high ambitions for the general good, reckon such a glorious condition of life to be very difficult, nay, rather impossible to compass. But it is not so. Far from it. For by the grace of God, and by the testimony of the beloved, those near to the threshold of the Creator, and by the incomparably high ambitions of the souls that are perfect, and the thoughts and opinions of the wisest men of the age, there never has been and is not now anything improbable and impossible in existence. What are required are the most resolved determination and the most ardent

Digitized by Google

enthusiasm. How many things which in ancient times were regarded as impossibilities, of such a kind that the intellect could hardly conceive them, we now perceive to have become quite simple and easy! Why then should this great and important matter of universal peace, which is verily the sun amongst the lights of civilization, the cause of honor, freedom and salvation for all, be considered as something improbable of realization?

It is evident that the honor and greatness of man have not arisen through bloodthirstiness, the destruction of cities and kingdoms, the ruining and murdering of armies and peoples. On the contrary the cause of highmindedness and prosperity is based upon the cherishing of justice and the sympathy with one's fellow-citizens, from the highest to the lowest, upon building up the kingdom, the cities and villages, the suburbs and the country and upon the freedom and quiet of the servants of God in laying down the foundations of the principles of progress and in the extension of the common weal, the increase of wealth and general prosperity. Reflect how many world-subduing kings have sat on thrones as conquerors; for example Halakoo Khan; Ameer Taimoor Koorkan, who subjugated the great continent of Asia; Alexander the Macedonian; and Napoleon the First, who stretched the hand of tyranny over three of the five continents of the world. And what ad-

Digitized by Google

vantages have resulted from these vast conquests? Was any kingdom established? or any gain of happiness? Was any dynasty permanently settled thereby? or did it mean merely the ending of the reign of one particular dynasty? The only result produced by the world-conquering operations of Halakoo and Djangiz, provoking war on all sides, was that the continent of Asia became like a heap of ashes beneath the blaze of terrible conflagrations.

Ameer Taimoor won no benefit by his subduing of the earth; he only dispersed the people in his path and destroyed the foundations of humanity.

The only outcome of the great conquest of Alexander the Macedonian was the fall of his son from his throne as a ruler; and the passing of his dominions into the hands of Cassander, Seleucus, Ptolemy, and Lysimachus.

Napoleon the First found no benefit in his victories over the kings of Europe; but he ruined well-constituted kingdoms and well-cultivated countries, he destroyed hundreds of thousands of men, terrorized and intimidated the whole continent of Europe, and ended his life in a wretched captivity. Such were the results left behind them by these kings and their huge conquests. Now, consider carefully in contrast the graces and the praiseworthy virtues, the highmindedness and great dignity of the just and righteous sovereign Anu-

Digitized by Google

sheerwan[1] the Just. At the time when that chief pillar of justice ascended the throne the Persian Government was shaken to its foundations by years of misrule and oppression: but, by his God-given wisdom, he established the reign of equity, abolished the methods of cruelty and injustice, and gathered together the dispersed people of Persia under the protecting shadow of the wings of his sovereignty.

In a short time, under the life-giving influence of his care and devotion, the decaying and desolate kingdom of Persia was quickened into fresh vitality and became one of the happiest of nationalities. He restored and fortified the weakened powers of the Government. His fame for justice spread over all the seven regions of the earth, and the greater part of the peoples of the world were raised from the depths of extreme povetry and degradation to the zenith of honor and prosperity.

Although he belonged to the nation of Magi,[2] and Center of the Creation, Muhammad, the Sun of Truth of the heaven of prophecy, uttered these blessed words concerning him: "I was born in the time of the Just King." And he rejoiced at having been born in the days of his government. Now,

[1] The Sassanian King, who reigned A. D. 531-578. He is proverbial in the East, and more especially in Persia, as the ideal administrator of justice.

[2] Gabres of Parsees, considered as idolators by the ancient Mussulman.

Digitized by Google

is that glorious monarch thus esteemed for his loving peace and justice, or for the shedding of blood in the overrunning of the world?

Reflect how pre-eminently he is distinguished in the world, the center of wonders, since the fame of his greatness is undying on earth and so he enjoys the glory of Eternal Life.

If we were to enter into an explanation of the reasons of the immortality of great men, this brief work would be unduly prolonged; and as it is not clear and evident that the reading of this book will result in any universal benefit to the general thought of the Persian people, we prefer to keep it short, and pass on to some questions which more nearly touch their intellect and mind. If, however, this short treatise should show any good results, we will later on, God the Almighty King willing, commence a work dealing with the essential bases of the divine philosophy in the heavenly Kingdom, and will write some larger books for the general edification.

However that may be, in this life the great powers of the world are not able to resist the victorious onslaught of the armies of justice: and the most impregnable fortress, resting upon the finest foundation, cannot oppose it. For all creatures shall obediently and willingly suffer themselves to be defeated in the victories won by this sharp sword, Justice, and the strongholds of the world, overthrown by its attack, shall be exalted to the ex-

Digitized by Google

tremest height of prosperity and filled to the fullest with happy people.

There are two great Banners which overshadow the crown of every sovereign; the first is that of Wisdom, the second that of Justice, which iron mountains cannot resist and which the "Wall of Alexander" will be powerless to stand against. With perfect ease will they penetrate into the states, the pillars of the world, like the great luminary, the bright lights of a sovereign's government.

It is quite plain and obvious, that the life of this mortal world, like the breezes at daybreak, is not enduring but passes away. Blessed therefore is the great one, who, walking in the path of God's will, shall leave behind him a praiseworthy fame and happy remembrance. "When the pure soul is about to pass away, what matter whether it dies on a throne, or on the surface of dust?" Yea, the expansion of the world and the subduing of the world are praised; yea, even war is sometimes the great foundation of peace, and destroying is the cause of rebuilding. If, for example, a great sovereign should wage war against a threatening foe, or for the unification of the whole body of people and divided kingdom, he may urge the steed of resolution into the racecourse of bravery and courage; in short, his war may be essentially attuned to the melodies of peace; and then verily this fury is kindness itself and this oppression is

Digitized by Google

the essence of justice itself and this war is the source of reconciliation. Today, the true duty of a powerful king is to establish a universal peace; for verily it signifies the freedom of all the people of the world.

The fourth word of that splendid narrative is, "obedient to his master's command." It is plain and evident that the greatest glory of humanity consists in obeying the Omnipotent God, and man's nobility and honor depend upon his following the injunctions ad prohibitions of the Lord, the Single One. The brightness of life hangs on Religion; and the progress, renown and happiness of people consist in keeping the commandments of God's holy Books. To one who considers life as a whole, it is manifest that in this world, regarded both materially and spiritually, Religion embodies the chief, infringible foundation of things, and the highest, most righteous and impregnable principles attainable in creation; it embodies the whole of the ideal and formal perfections, and it is the controller of the civilization and the prosperity of all mankind.

But there are some feeble-minded persons who, not having given any sufficiently attentive or deep consideration to the fundamentals of the divine religions, have assumed the hypocritical ways of people only professedly religious to be the stand-

Digitized by Google

ard, imagining all the religious-minded to be of the same stamp. They have, therefore, deemed religion to be a hindrance to the common advancement; nay, they have accounted it to be the origination of all quarrels and disputes; and the cause of hatred and general enmity between human beings. They have not so much as reflected, that the bases of divine religions cannot be discerned in the deeds of those who merely profess religion. There is nothing, however good, which is not capable of being most flippantly abused in this world.

For example, if a lighted lamp be put in the hands of ignorant children, or blind people, they neither lighten the house nor banish the prevailing darkness; on the contrary, they will set on fire both themselves and the house. Can it be said that the lamp is to be blamed on this account? In the name of God, no! A lamp is a guide to the path and a light-giver to one who sees; but it is a great misfortune to a blind man. Thus, there was a man named Voltaire, a native of France, one of the scoffers at religious customs, who wrote several works in abuse of it, whose contents are worthy of the toys of ignorant children. This man has assumed as the standard of religion the characters and conduct of the Popes who are the heads of the Roman Catholic Faith; the evil proceedings of the spiritual leaders of Christianity have opened the mouth of opposition to the Spirit of God, Jesus Christ; and with his

Digitized by Google

misdirected reason Voltaire did not comprehend the real significance of the holy divine Books, but he has raised misleading difficulties and objections about some of the contents and subjects of the heaven-revealed Books. "And we revealed in the *Quran* what is cure and mercy unto the believers, but it increaseth nothing unto the wrong-doers except loss."

How beautifully the Physician of Ghaznah has explained this:

"In the case of those who cannot understand the ideal parables;
If they perceive nothing in the *Quran* but words,
It is no wonder for they are led astray.
For, in the rays of the most brilliant sun,
The eye of the blind can discover nothing but heat."

As it is written: "Many will go astray by it, and many shall be led by it; but none shall go astray by it but the wicked."

It is plain and manifest that the surest means towards the well-being and prosperity of men, and towards the highest object of civilization, the liberty of the citizen, are love and friendship and the most intimate union between all individuals of the human race. Nothing in the world can be imagined or rendered easy without union and agreement; and the true divine religion is the most perfect cause of friendship and union in the world. As it is written: "Hadst thou expended

Digitized by Google

all that was in the earth, thou couldst not reconcile their hearts; but God reconciled them." [1]

Such is the power of true union, both inward and outward, which was seen in the raising up of the Prophets of God, who gathered together under the protecting shade of the Word of Unity families and tribes which were at feud, so that a hundred thousand souls were counted as one man, and thousands of men were represented in the form of a single Person. "Their numbers are like the waves, which the wind has gathered together into one; as The Truth shed his light upon them, never his light shall be dispersed. Separated from each other is the life of the wolves and dogs; united are the souls of the lions of God" (believers).

The details of occurrences that took place in the times of the raising up of the prophets of old (upon whom be peace!), and their manners, conditions and signs, are not mentioned at length in the authentic histories, as might certainly have been expected, but are briefly alluded to in the verses of the *Quran* and in traditions and in the Bible.

But as, since the time of the Patriarch Moses, we have full accounts of the happenings in the great *Quran,* and in the authentic traditions, in the Bible and in trustworthy histories, we will

[1] A story is related by commentators on this passage that a quarrel arose between the tribes of Alawas and Al Khuzraj. They were mortal enemies and had been fiercely fighting for 120 years. But by the teaching of the *Quran* they were entirely reconciled so that they loved each other like brothers.

Digitized by Google

therefore briefly set them forth, so that by these sure evidences all may have proof and demonstration of the true answer to this question:

Is Religion the real fundamental principle of humanity and civilization? or is it—as Voltaire and such as he have thought it to be—the destroyer of the essentials of the success, peace and well-being of mankind?

The answer will be given so conclusively that it should be impossible for any nation on earth to deny its truth; because it shall be according to the authentic history of all nations and the belief of all peoples of the earth.

When the children of Israel multiplied rapidly, they came to be scattered over all parts of the kingdom of Egypt. The Egyptian kings of the Hyksos dynasty began then to bestow honors and powers on their own people, the Egyptians, and to despise and oppress the Hebrews, who were regarded as foreigners. The children of Israel, who were dispersed through the land, were for a long time captives in the hands of the Egyptians, were oppressed and tortured, and were scorned by all the people; to this extent that the basest Egyptian might torture and persecute the noblest Hebrew. In fact, such was their bondage, degradation and oppression, that neither by day nor by night had the Israelites any security for their own lives; nor could their children and wives find any

Digitized by Google

refuge or protection from the injustice and cruelty of Pharaoh's ministers.

They were so unhappy that their food became even like unto morsels of their own hearts swelling with blood, and their drink became tears, like unto the Jayhun.[1]

In such an agonized condition were they, until the Beauty of Moses beheld the splendor of the fire of Oneness, by the side of the valley of Safety —the blessed Shrine. And he heard the life-prolonging Voice of God from the spiritual divine fire in the Bush; which was neither from the East nor from the West. He was exalted to universal prophecy, and shone like the lamp of guidance among the Hebrews; and by the light of guidance he led those gone astray in the darkness of ignorance to the right path of knowledge and perfection. Having gathered all the various tribes of the Israelites together under the protecting shadow of the Word of Unity, he raised aloft the banner of perfect union over the hills of agreement and friendliness. So, in a short time those ignorant people having been educated by the divine teaching, were no longer alienated one from the other, but were attached to the Oneness of God; they were saved from despite, degradation, poverty, captivity, and ignorance, and were divinely favored with the highest degree of renown and prosperity. They then emigrated from the king-

[1] A Persian name for the river Oxus.

Digitized by Google

dom of Egypt and turned their steps towards the original, native land of Israel; and so they arrived at the land of the Canaanites and Philistines. They first conquered the regions about the river Jordan and Jericho and dwelt in them, and later they occupied all the neighboring towns from Phœnicia, Zoan to Ammon.

Finally in the time of Joshua the Bani Israel came to have rule over the countries of thirty-one kingdoms. They then surpassed all the nations of the world in all kinds of human qualities; in science, knowledge, steadfastness, resolution, bravery, courage, honor and generosity. At that period whenever an Israelite entered into a company of people, he could be distinguished by his amiable characteristics; and if one of the other nations wished to praise anybody, they would compare him to an Israelite. It is written in several histories that the Greek philosophers, such as Pythagoras, acquired most of their knowledge of the divine and natural philosophy from the disciple of the great King Solomon. Socrates, when travelling, met some of the most celebrated theologians of Israel and learnt many things from them; and after his return to Greece he established the belief in the Unity of God and in the immortality of the soul after the decomposition of the bodily elements. The ignorant men in Athens consequently objected to one who had sounded the mystery of philosophy and were enraged against

Digitized by Google

him; so that he was obliged to poison himself in prison.

However, after the Jews had attained this high stage of civilization and had been privileged to reach the highest possible degree of prosperity, they gradually forgot the fundamental bases of religion—the law of Moses—and steeped themselves in superficial ceremonies and heathen customs. In the time of Rehoboam, the son of King Solomon, there were great discussions among the children of Israel, and Jeroboam claimed the kingship and set up the worship of idols. For many centuries, war was carried on between Rehoboam and Jeroboam and his descendants, and the Jewish tribes became wholly disorganized and disunited.

Finally, forgetting the significance of God's law, they darkened their ways with heathen superstitions and with outrageous revolt and rebellion. Their theological doctors disregarded the needs of humanity, which were written in the holy Books, and looked solely after their personal profits, which reduced the nation to the extreme of religious negligence and ignorance. As a result of this, their seemingly permanent prosperity was changed to the uttermost degree of degradation; the rulers of Persia, Greece and Rome defeated them; and the banner of their authority was destroyed. The ignorance and foolishness, selfishness and degradation of the religious leaders of the community were

Digitized by Google

revealed in their fulness when they were opposed to Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon. He tore up the life of the Israelites by its roots; and after the customary murdering, plundering and destroying of houses and fields and towns, he took captive those who survived his sword and brought them to Babylon.

After seventy years, the children of the captivity were released and returned to Jerusalem. Hezekiah and Ezra (upon whom be peace!) engaged day by day in re-establishing the authority of the holy Books, and the Israelites began to recover from their evil ways; and therewith dawned for them again the bright morning of former generations.

Not many years later, there again rose great dissensions and differences among them in their conduct and thoughts. The ideas of the Jewish leaders were turned to worldly objects, and the progress of the Jews during the time of Ezra (upon whom be peace!) was changed to corrupt customs and the fostering of evil.

So far did their immorality go, that the soldiers of Rome, and others, even their own people, subjugated the kingdom of Israel.

Lastly came Titus, the warrior and Roman general, who levelled the native land of the Jews to the dust, so effectively that he killed countless numbers of their men, captured their women and children, destroyed their houses, cut down their

Digitized by Google

trees, burnt their books, robbed them of their possions and made Jerusalem as a heap of ashes. After this conclusive conquest the star of the government of the Israelites set in the West of nothingness. Since then, these people have been dispersed and scattered all over the world. As it is written: "And they shall draw upon them indignation and shall be smitten with poverty." These two disasters caused by Nebuchadnezzar and Titus are mentioned in the glorious *Quran*. As it is written: "And we announced the decree unto the children of Israel in the book, that you shall commit evil in the earth twice, and rise up in great insurrection." Even he says: "And when the time of the second threat came, we sent enemies to abase them, and to enter the temple, and they entered it the first time; and to destroy utterly what they conquered." [1]

The purport of this is that men should consider how true religion becomes the means of civilization, fame, prosperity, the enhancer of dignity and education and a source of progress for the degraded and captive, the submissive and the ignorant. And when it falls into the hands of ignorant and superstitious leaders, the great light of religion is changed by their evil acts into a great darkness.

When for the second time the phenomena and signs of the dispersion, misery, nothing less than op-

[1] *Quran* xvi. 7.

Digitized by Google

pression of the Israelites appeared, then the holy excellent breeze of the Spirit of God, Jesus Christ, blew upon the coasts of the river of Jordan in the land of Galilee, and the showers of mercy rose over that land, and there was a great spiritual rain; so that by the overflowing of that great Sea, the wilderness of Jerusalem was perfumed with the fragrances of the knowledge of God, and the universal harmonies of the glorious good Tidings reached the ears of the people from the choirs of the heavenly Kingdom. By the breath of Christ the dead souls were wakened from the graves of negligence and ignorance and were endowed with eternal life. During a period of three years, that Luminary of the Zenith of perfection moved in and through the country and wilderness of Jerusalem and Palestine, leading all men to the Morning of Guidance and educating them to supreme spiritual and moral ideals.

If the people of Israel had accepted that Luminous Beauty, Jesus Christ, and had girded up the loins of service to obey him, they would have been quickened by a new spirit, and refreshed by plenteous vernal rains from the life-giving breezes of the Spirit of God. But alas! they opposed him and arose to persecute that source of inspired knowledge and the falling place of the divine revelation; all except a few who were turning towards God and were purified from the dark vices of this temporary world and thought to as-

Digitized by Google

cend to the place which has no place, where God and his saints dwell.

But the people in general brought troubles so terrible on that Orient of the divine bounties, that it was impossible for him even to remain and take rest in any village. He knew not where to lay his head; notwithstanding this, the Banner of the Great Guidance was raised aloft, and the foundation of our moral advancement or civilization, which is at the root of universal humanity, become established. In Matthew, v. 39, he gives advice of which this is the translation, "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also"; and likewise in the 43rd verse, He says, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor (Lev. xix. 18), and hate thy enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain (of mercy) on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" The teachings of that Dawning-place of the divine wisdom are many of this kind.

Verily those souls that are characterized by the

Digitized by Google

sacred qualities of the Beatitudes are the essence of existence and the dawning-place of true civilization. Christ hath indeed established the Law of Holiness on a foundation of pure spirituality and moral perfection; and he hath laid down for believers special rules and customs which belong to the essence of life and of the world. Although even this Manifestation of spiritual and moral guidance was outwardly tortured by the remorseless hatred and persecution of his oppressors, yet having escaped from the darkness of the Jews, he shone and was manifested by the Light of the eternal glory in a new dawn.

The powerful Jewish nation vanished and disappeared; but those few of them who hastened to the protecting shade of the Blessed Tree of Christ, verily they rejuvenated all the peoples of the world. At that time all nations were plunged in the lowest depths of superstition, ignorance, and heathenism. They did not believe in the Unity of God, but in a plurality of deities. There were no monotheists except a few Jews; they had neither the power nor the spirit to exert any influence. Then arose those blessed souls, the disciples of Christ, to promulgate a religion which was repugnant and opposed to the opinions of the whole of mankind.

All the rulers of the earth took determined measures to exterminate the people of Jesus. Nevertheless and in consequence, most of the disciples

Digitized by Google

strove with all their heart and soul to spread abroad the divine religion; and presently all the kings of Europe, many of the peoples of Asia and Africa, and some of the dwellers in the Isles of the Ocean were gathered together under the protecting shadow of the Word of Unity.

Reflect now, is there in existence any surer and greater foundation of life and conduct than religion? Or could any surer and greater than the divine religion be imagined which encompasses the whole of creation? Have there ever been any other means and bond of love, intimacy, union and perfect harmony like the faith in the beloved Omniscient One? Or has there ever been known any other foundation for the general instruction in all morality except that of the heavenly laws? The qualities which characterize the sages from of old and the highest degree of perfection obtainable through philosophy were possessed from the commencement of their conversion and confession by the believers in God who were merely a primary manifestation of these perfections.[1]

Let us remember what a high moral ideal was attained by those souls who drank of the Salsabil of guidance from the hands of grace of the Spirit of God,[2] and sheltered themselves under the pro-

[1] The founders of the divine Religions place their disciples at once in the position to which all sages point as the end of wisdom. "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

[2] Jesus Christ.

Digitized by Google

tecting shadow of the *Gospel.* This was testified to by the famous physician Galen, who, although he was not a Christian, nevertheless, in the course of a commentary on Plato's *Politics* praises the believers in God in the following words:—

"Most people cannot understand teaching which proceeds from the evidence of facts: they therefore need something in the way of mystery, such as promises of rewards and punishments in a future life. What proves it is this—that today we behold a religious sect who are called Nazarenes (*i.e.* Christians), who believe in rewards and punishments on the Last Day. And by them excellent achievements are performed, like those of a true philosopher. Thus we all see with our own eyes that they have no fear of death, and, with their ardent longing for wisdom and justice, they are to be accounted among the true philosophers." [1]

These words of Galen, and the position he assigns to a philosopher in that age, go to show that there could be no higher position occupied by anyone than by the Christians of those days. Reflect, how the divine religion, with the power of its spiritual splendor, enabled most of the believers to reach such a degree of moral perfection, that a famous man like Galen, though he was not an adherent of Christianity, yet bears witness to the fact.

[1] Cf. *Some Answered Questions;* collected and translated from the Persian of Abdu'l-Bāha by Laura Clifford Barney, p. 341 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Limited, 1908), or p. 347 (Chicago: Bahai Publishing Society, 1918).

Digitized by Google

Among their good deeds and pious acts, the Christians established infirmaries, hospitals, and charitable institutions. The Emperor Constantine, for instance, was the first in the times of the Roman empire to found a public hospital for the treatment of poor people who had no one to care for them. This great Emperor was the first of the Roman emperors to throw himself heart and soul into the cause of the Spirit of God. He resolutely exerted himself to promulgate the principles of the *Gospel*, and he brought justice and moderation into the methods of the Roman government, which previously was noted for the sheerest injustice and oppression.

His blessed name shines forth in the dawn of history like a star of the day-break; and the fame of his greatness in the world of civilization is celebrated among all sects of Christians. In short, through the blessing of the education of those holy souls, who devoted their lofty efforts to the dissemination of the teaching of the *Gospel,* firm foundations of ideal morals were at that period established in the world, and numerous schools, colleges, infirmaries and institutions for educating poor and orphan children, were inaugurated.

Many were the souls who forsook their personal profit, seeking to please God, and they spent their lives in educating and instructing the people. But when the dawn of the bright morning of the

Digitized by Google

Beauty of Ahmad[1] drew nigh, the reins of all Christianity had fallen into the hands of ignorant monks. And the merciful breezes of grace were entirely stayed, and the commandments of the glorious *Gospel,* which were at the roots of civilization, were set at naught by the evil acts and conduct of those who were outwardly honorable and inwardly unworthy.

All the authoritative historians of Europe, who have treated of the circumstances, conditions, manners, politics, education, and general civilization of the past centuries, Middle Ages, and modern times, have declared that during the ten Mediæval centuries, which extend from the beginning of the sixth century A. D. to the end of the fifteenth century, the kingdoms of Europe were in a most unhappy state and terribly lacking in every essential of civilization.

The chief cause of this was, that the monks, as the Europeans called the spiritual leaders of religion, neglecting the eternal glory of obeying the holy precepts and the heavenly teachings of the *Gospel,* were in co-operation with the pillars of wordly government, the ministers of state, of that age, who were advocates of oppression and rebellion, and, closing their eyes to the glory which is enduring they aided one another in their efforts towards securing mere temporary advantages and

[1] When Muhammad declared himself as the Messenger of God.

Digitized by Google

carnal benefits. So that matters at length reached such a pass that the peoples fell wholly into the hands of the ministers of state and of the monks, with the result that the fundamental bases of the religion, civilization, and prosperity of the nations of Europe were destroyed.

And then the dawn of hope arose, the season of the divine spring was at hand, the showers of mercy rained down, and the life-giving winds of grace blew upon mankind. The Sun of goodness ascending from the horizon of Hijaz and of Yathreb,[1] revealed itself in the holiness of the Prophet Muhammad and bestowed upon the world the light of everlasting glory. There was a change in the lands in which great talents were showed, and the meaning of the verse—"brightened the earth with the Light of the Lord"—grew to be interpreted that the world became a new world and the dead body of the world was inspired anew with an infinite spirit of life. Oppression and ignorance were extirpated from their roots, and the high portico of knowledge and justice grew to be lofty and exalted. The sea of progress swept onward and the lights of science shone forth. The barbarous tribes and nations of the regions of Hijaz were the most ignorant of the peoples and barbarous tribes of the earth before the blazing of the burning lamp of the great Prophet in the land of Batha.[2]

[1] Medina.

[2] Mekka.

Digitized by Google

Their depraved habits and horrible customs, their blood-thirstiness, quarrelling and animosities were described in the books and histories of that time; the civilized nations did not regard the Arabian tribes of Yathreb and Batha as human beings. But, after the dawn of the Luminary of the world in that land and country, through the teaching of that source of perfection and vessel of the revelation of God, the Owner of Glory, and by the grace of the holy divine Law, they were in a short time gathered together under the protecting shadow of the word of divine Unity; and those savage peoples progressed so far in the stages of humanity and ideal perfection, that all the rest of the nations of that epoch were amazed and filled with wonderment.

The very tribes, races and nations who were always in the habit of scorning and despising the Arabians, and considering them a people of no account, thronged with great eagerness to the native land and kingdom of the Arabians in order to study politics and the branches of learning and the sciences, and to be taught the arts and handicrafts, and acquire other elements of civilization. Consider what was the real educating factor in the case of these Arabian people, whose savagery and ignorance during their period of heathendom was such, that they used to bury alive their daughters at seven years of age—an act which even an animal would loathe and shrink from, but which

Digitized by Google

they in the extremity of their ignorance, gloried in, and reckoned to be a sign of the supreme nobility of mind. A people who were so grossly and cruelly ignorant were raised by the blessings of the teaching of the great Prophet to such power that they conquered the kingdoms of Egypt, Syria, Damascus, Chaldea, Arabia and Persia. In their sole hands was the administration of everything most important in the four quarters of the world.

The Arabians became the first among the nations and peoples of the earth in science and art, education, philosophy, politics, morals, handicrafts and inventions. Verily, the growth of scattered savage tribes within a short period to the highest possible degree of human perfection, is the completest proof of the real power and prophethood of Muhammad, the Chief of Creation. In the first ages of the sway of Islam, all the nations of Europe acquired their ideas of morality, and the art of civilization from Islam and from the inhabitants of the kingdom of Spain. A study of books of general history will prove and make it manifest that most of the culture of Europe has been derived from Islam. So the Europeans gradually collected the books of the philosophers, sages, theologians, and learned men of Islam, and read and discussed them in their scientific institutions and universities with the utmost zeal, and derived great benefit from them.

Digitized by Google

So much so, that there are several copies in the libraries of the kingdoms of Europe, of all those books of the learned men of Islam which are rare in their native countries. If there were no fear of unduly lengthening this treatise, I could show how heavily the Islamic books of theology and law, and their ideas and principles, which are now current in the various kingdoms of Europe, have been laid under contribution by the latter.

The commencement of modern European civilization took place in the seventh century of the Hegira. It came about in this way. In the latter part of the fifth century,[1] the Pope, the head of Christendom, raised a great lamentation and moaning, because the sacred places of the Christians, such as Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth, were fallen under the rule of Islam. By his encouragement and exhortation he induced the great majority of the nations of Europe to wage a religious war. Such were his wailings and laments that all the kingdoms of Europe rose up in arms. The kings of the people of the Cross, with many soldiers, crossed over the Gulf of Constantinople into the continent of Asia. At that time the Khalifat were ruling over the province of Egypt and some of the Arabian kingdoms; and the kings of Turistan, that is the Saldjukees of the desert of Syria,

[1] Of the Hegira.

Digitized by Google

were also generally under their rule and obedient to them.

So the kings of Europe with a numerous army invaded the desert of Syria and Egypt, and for a period of 203 years continual wars were carried on between the kings of the country of Syria and the European kings, and reinforcements were ever arriving from Europe. The kings of Europe repeatedly conquered every fortress and strong place in Syria; and the kings of Islam delivered them out of their hands. After Solah ed Din the King Mansoor Ayooby in the year 693 of Hegira expelled all the kings and troops of Europe from the kingdoms and coasts of Syria and Egypt; and they returned in defeat and disappointment to Europe. In these wars, which are known as the wars of the people of the Cross, millions of persons were killed.

So, from the beginning of the year 490 of Hegira to the year 693, the kings, generals and chief men of Europe were continually coming and going in the countries of Syria and Egypt. When finally they returned to Europe, they established there what they had seen and known of the politics, civilization, education, colleges, schools, and the excellent ceremonies and customs of the kingdoms of Islam, during that period of 203 years. The period of European civilization dates from that time.

O people of Persia! How long will you per-

Digitized by Google

sist in procrastination, in slothfulness? You that were masters of the world and in the van of mankind—how is it that you have lost your ancient glory, that you have slept in the corner of obscurity? You who were once the fount of teaching and the spring of the progress of humanity—why have you now become so exhausted and degenerate and negligible? You who were the source of light to the human race—how is it that you are thrust back into the darkness of neglect and spiritlessness?

Open the eyes of your judgment and discern what it is that you sorely need. Gird up the loins of resolution and enthusiasm, and strive for the means of education and advancement. Is it fitting that foreign tribes and nations should derive and acquire the virtues of humanity and education from the teaching left behind them by your ancestors and forefathers, whilst you who are their children and heirs go without such benefits? Does it commend itself to you that, whilst your neighbors are endeavoring day and night, with all their heart and soul, to master the means of progress, renown and well-being, you, steeped in ignorant superstition, should give way to quarrelling, disputes, fractiousness, carnal desires and selfish thoughts? Is it praised and praiseworthy that you waste your natural genius and inborn capacity and creative intellect in dullness and vanity, making no use of them? As we pass from

Digitized by Google

the subject, let it be mentioned that all the scholars and learned men of Europe, who are acquainted with the facts of ancient history and have a reputation for truth and judgment, are convinced and believe that their civilization has been derived from Islam in every particular. See, for instance, Ducoudray,[1] the celebrated French writer, whose knowledge and authority and learning are testified to by all the scholars and savants of Europe.

In his book entitled *The Progress of Nations in Humanity, Politeness and Learning,* which is one of his famous works, he has written in great detail on the subject of the European nations having acquired from Islam the laws of civilization and the principles of progress and prosperity. He has, however, dealt with it at such length that it is not possible, within the space of the present treatise, to insert a translation of his remarks. The reader who wishes for more detail can refer to the book itself.

Briefly, M. Ducoudray has explained and proves that the whole civilization of Europe is built upon the laws, regulations, principles, literature, philosophy and sciences, the excellent customs and ceremonies, the art, the handicrafts, manners, institutions, and morals of Islam, many even of the words used in the French language being also derived from Arabic. He has gone into a detailed examination of each of these points,

[1] G. Ducoudray, *Histoire de la Civilisation,* p. 1104, Paris (1886).

Digitized by Google

and has shown and verified even the dates when these acquisitions from Islam were severally made; and how the Arabs entered into the western country which is called today the kingdom of Spain; and how in a short time they established a complete civilization there, how perfect was the machinery of their politics and education, how solidly they built up schools, colleges, sciences, arts, philosophy and handicrafts, how widely their authority and greatness extended; and how many children of the nobles of the kingdoms of Europe used to visit the universities of Qartaba,[1] Gharnata Ashbeellan,[2] and Toolid,[3] and studied the science of arts there. He has also mentioned that one European named Cuthbert, who visited the Arabian kingdom and entered the university of Cordova, as a student of science and art on his return to Europe became so famous that subsequently he sat as Pope on the throne of the Roman Catholic Church.

The purport of these disquisitions is plain and manifest, that the real sources of both our ideal and practical perfecting lie in the divine religions and that they are the fountainhead for the development of civilization, for the beneficent and universal education of humanity. To anyone who regards life with just and unprejudiced eyes,

[1] Carthagène.
[2] Sévilla.
[3] Toledo.

Digitized by Google

it will be clear that all political laws are embraced in the following blessed words. As it is written:—

"Believing in God and the Last Day, and commending what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and hastening forward in goodness; these are the righteous people." [1]

Likewise he says: "Verily, God ordaineth justice and kindness and giving to your kindred and forbiddeth you sin, vice and rebellion. He adviseth you that ye may understand." [2]

And regarding moral civilization he says: "Turn to forgiving and command what is good and shun the ignorant." [3]

Again he says: "Who expend their possessions in charity, and the easing of troubles, who suppress their anger and forgive men; and God loveth the virtuous." [4]

And again he says: "It is no virtue if you turn your faces towards the East or the West, but virtue is in him who believeth in God, in the Last Day, the angels, the Book and the Prophets; and giveth money for God's love unto his kindred, and the orphans, and the needy, and travelers, and beggars, and for the release of captives, debtors and slaves; and who observeth prayer and giveth the legal alms; as well as those who perform their

[1] *Quran* ii. 110.
[2] *Quran* xvi. 92.
[3] *Ibid.* vii. 198.
[4] *Ibid.* iii. 128.

Digitized by Google

covenant when they have covenanted; and who behave patiently in hardships and adversity and in times of violence; these are they who speak the truth and these are they who fear God and seek his shelter." [1]

Again he says: "And they that prefer them over themselves, even though there be poverty amongst them; and he who is saved from his own covetousness; these are the men who shall prosper." [2]

Reflect, that these few blessed verses contain the innermost essence of real civilization and the highest ideal of the most excellent human character. "For verily there is no God but He." In like manner, the less important advantages of civilization are also obtainable through the teachings of the Prophets of God.

What thing of value to mankind has ever existed, which has not been written in the divine holy Books, either directly or symbolically? But alas! when arms are in the hands of cowards, there is no safety either for life or property. On the contrary, they give power and authority into the hands of the thief. In like manner when inefficient priests hold the reins of governance, they become even as thick veils to screen the splendor of religion.

At the bottom of religion is sincerity; to be

[1] *Quran* ii. 177.
[2] *Ibid.* lix. 9.

Digitized by Google

more explicit, the religious man must be free from all personal hatred and should exert himself for the good of the community. Only by the agency of true religion is it possible for men to close their eyes to their own personal advantages and to sacrifice their own personal benefit for the general well-being. For, self-love is inherent in the disposition of man, and it is impossible for him to neglect his own casual temporal advantages unless he has the hope of a great proportionate reward in the next world.

But he who has assurance in God and is a believer in his Word, as he has a promise and assurance of universal reward in the next world, deems all worldly gains as nothing, compared to the well-being and glory that await him according to his deserts hereafter. He therefore sets aside his own comfort and selfish interests and, seeking the sight of God, freely devotes himself, heart and soul, to the common good, "and he is one of those who forsaketh himself to endeavor to please God."

Some persons think that the natural righteousness of man is a hindrance to his committing evil acts, and is a controlling guide towards his ideal and practical perfecting—that is to say, that he who is endowed with natural wisdom, a zealous disposition, and self-control, is not tempted to bring trouble on his fellow-creatures and is most anxious to do what is right, without any considera-

Digitized by Google

tion of the severe punishments assigned for deeds of wickedness, and the great rewards for good deeds.

In reply—a careful study of general history, first of all makes it manifest and demonstrates, that a natural sense of right proceeds from the graces of the teachings of God's Prophets. We likewise notice in the case of young children, that, if they are deprived of the instruction of a teacher, the signs of cruelty and perversity become manifest in them, and their vicious habits gradually increase; clearly, therefore, the development of a natural righteousness is also the result of teaching.

Secondly, in answer to those who imagine that natural wisdom and an inherent sense of right is a hindrance to wrong-doing and that it therefore also leads to the performance of good works, it is plain and obvious that such persons are like the great Elixir which never can be discovered. For such a hypothesis cannot be established by mere words; verily acts are needed. Now, in what concern of life can the community be protected and guarded simply by good intentions, without pious acts?

Besides this, he who is endowed with natural morality, if he truly becomes an incarnation of the fear of God, surely he will be the more steadfast and persevering in the harmonies of his good works. In brief, every benefit to mankind is obtained by the graces of the divine Religion,

Digitized by Google

because it leads the truly religious souls to sincere purposes, high ambitions, spotless chastity and honor, kindliness and mercy, fidelity to promise, freedom of rights and liberality; justice to all classes and conditions of men, manliness, generosity, courage, resolute endeavor and striving for the good of all the servants of God. Furthermore, it induces the various pleasing customs of humanity which are the bright candle of civilization.

If a man is not endowed with these amiable qualities, surely he has not yet tasted a drop of the water of the clear Euphrates, from which flow the rivers of the maxims of the holy divine Books, and he has not breathed any breath of the holy air of the divine earth. For nothing in existence can be accomplished only by words. There is a rule and sign for every station in life, and every class has its mark or symbol.

To sum up, our meaning in this exposition is that it is manifest and proved that the divine religions and the sacred Laws of God and the heavenly teachings are the great foundation of human well-being. There is no other salvation and real freedom for all the peoples of the world without this greatest and best kind of remedy. But on the condition that it should be administered by a sincere physician; if not, the medicines of immediate cure which the Lord hath created for the healing of the diseases and infirmities of man-

Digitized by Google

kind may fall into the hands of an unskillful doctor, so that health and cure cannot be attained; on the contrary, they shall be the cause of death to the poor, and a sorrow to the hearts of those who are powerless to interfere. For example, we have been commanded by the Source of the divine wisdom and the Manifestation of the Universal Prophethood, that, for the encouragement and stimulation in learning the sciences and acquiring arts and trades, we should visit even the farthermost regions of China![1] But our unskillful physicians forbid it, and make it matter of dispute, and try to prove that "Whoso likens himself to one of the other nations, he is one of them"; whilst they have not themselves understood the meaning of the said resemblance, and do not know yet that the divine sacred Laws impel and encourage the whole nation to the studying of the principles of inventive improvements and the learning of sciences and arts from the other nations. Anyone who contradicts this shall be deprived of the Salsabil of Knowledge; and is wandering in the desert of ignorance after the mirage of selfish hatred.

Now, consider fairly, which of these new improvements are contrary to the precepts of God, either in intention or in act? Well, there is this blessed verse which says, "Command them to con-

[1] A well-known Hadeeth quoted.

Digitized by Google

sult among themselves."[1] And words of the same meaning were spoken[2] to the Dawning-place of Knowledge and Fountain-head of perfection;[3] with all his universal virtues both ideal and formal, He says, "Consult with them in this matter." When we take this into account how can it be said that consultation[4] would be repugnant to the rules of the sacred law? The proofs of reason also make the supreme advantages of consultation evident and manifest.

Or again, is it contrary to the divine Laws that the infliction of capital punishment should be dependent on diligent inquiries, the verification of the law courts' legal proofs, and the command of the sovereign? Were all the acts of capital punishment carried out in the times of ancient government, according to the precepts of the *Quran?* It has, for instance, been handed down by tradition that the Governor of Gulpaigan, in the time of the prime ministry of Hadji Mirza Agasee,[5] without cross-examination, and without permission of anyone, ordered thirteen humble persons, the chiefs of the villages of Gulpaigan, who were of the stock of descendants of the Pure

[1] *Quran* xlii. 36. By this verse do the Muhammadans, in Persia and Turkey prove the orthodoxy of the Constitution.

[2] By God.

[3] Muhammad.

[4] A Parliament.

[5] At the time of the persecutions of the Babis at the beginning of Naseurd'Din Shah's reign.

Digitized by Google

One [1] and had committed no crime, to be beheaded within one hour by an extreme act of injustice.

At one time the inhabitants of Persia numbered over fifty millions. Some of this number were annihilated in civil wars, but more of them were destroyed through the absence of proper political government, and by the tyranny of their rulers; and now after this long lapse of time, there is not one-fifth of the people left. For the governors, of their own authority, seized upon many innocent persons who displeased them and burnt them up with the fire of wrath. Or if a man was proved to be a murderer he would stir up people against the laws for his personal objects and no one had power to make resistance, for the governor was not one to be looked to in matters of justice. Can anyone affirm that such a state of things was according to justice and judgment, and in agreement with the commandments of the religion of God?

Or, can it be said that the principles of the divine religion are opposed to the giving of encouragement and stimulation for the study of useful sciences and the spreading of general education, a knowledge of the practical advantages of natural philosophy, the extension of the domain of handicrafts and the increase of the materials of commerce and national wealth? Or are the disposition of the military forces in the cities, the plan-

[1] The holy Fatima.

Digitized by Google

ning of suburbs and villages, the repairing of roads and bridges and the construction of railways in order to facilitate the means of transport and the traveling of the inhabitants of a country—are these opposed and repugnant to the Threshold of Unity? Or are the discovering of abandoned mines which are a great source of wealth to a state and nation, and the founding of works and factories, which are a means of well-being, peace, and riches for a whole nation, the encouragement of the originating of new handicrafts, and the advancement of the progress of home trade—are these adverse to the commandments of the Lord of Creation?

Verily, verily, I wonder how the veil of darkness has been cast over men's eyes that they cannot perceive the truth of things so obvious!

When such irrefragable evidences and proofs are brought forward, there is no doubt that objectors will reply to them, out of the deep hatred of their hearts, that on the Judgment Day when our lives are in the hands of God, inquiries will not be made about the sciences or education or complete civilization of a man, but pious deeds will be required. First of all, let us say in rejoinder that no questions will be raised as to education and civilization. Will they not, in the Day of great Judgment at the Court of God, ask: "O Leaders and Chiefs of this great nation, why were you the cause that they should have descended

Digitized by Google

from the zenith of their ancient glory, and are ousted from their position at the center of civilization, although it was in your power to become the means of advancing the sacred glory of the nation? It is plain enough, and easy to see that you have neglected this duty, yea, that you have diminished the ancient renown of the people. Were this people not in the heaven of prosperity like the shining stars? Why have you been the cause of their having fallen into such black darkness? You, who were able to light the lamp of the glory of the people in both worlds—why did you not do so with all your soul? When the luminous Lamp of the Graces of God was lighted, you did not shelter it from the winds of differences, by the globe of your resolution; why did you rise to extinguish it with all your power?"

"The record of every man we have attached to his neck and on the day of the resurrection, we will produce it unto him in a book which we shall find open."[1]

Secondly, we demand, what highest deeds in the world could be greater than working in the public interests? Can any higher career be imagined than this, that a man should devote himself to the cause of the education, progress, glory and prosperity of the servants of God? No, in God's name! It is the greatest of pious deeds that the blessed souls should take hold of them that are

[1] *Quran* xvii. 14.

Digitized by Google

powerless by the hands, and deliver them from ignorance, degradation and poverty, and, filled with sincere purpose for the sake of God, should gird up the loins of their ambition in the service of all people, forgetting their own worldly advantage and striving for the common good. As it is written, "And prefer others over thyself, even though there be poverty amongst them; the best of men are those who do good to their fellows, and the worst are those who do harm to them."

Gracious God! What an extraordinary and wonderful thing it is, that nobody, when he listens to these words, properly ponders and perceives what the particular speaker means by this saying, and what personal hatred and self-interest he may have hidden behind the veil of words! For example, you will notice one man who, because of his own paltry interests, may become a hindrance to the prosperity of the majority, and for the fulfilling of his desires will destroy and will let the fields and plantations of a great multitude of people be parched up. In order to maintain his mastery, he may continually lead the people into ignorant, superstitious ways, which are the ruin of the bases of civilization. Notwithstanding that this man may commit acts like these which are abhorred in the Threshold of the Almighty, and hated by all the Prophets and saints of God, if he sees a person after a meal washing his hands with soap, the inventor of which was Abdullah

Digitized by Google

Bonay, a Muhammadan, although that humble man has not yet touched his hem and beard with his hands, yet he raises up his voice and cries that the principle of the law is being set at naught! And that customs of the countries of the infidels have been introduced! He never sees that his own acts are evil, but he reckons the cause of cleanliness to be ignorance and wickedness!

O people of Persia! Open your eyes and unclose your ears, and free yourselves from imitating the people of vain imagination, for it is the especial path towards folly and ignorance.

Discover for yourselves the reality of things, and strive to assimilate the methods by which the means of life, of well-being, of noble-mindedness and glory are attained among the nations and people of the world.

The Breezes of the true Spring are blowing; be therefore adorned with buds and flowers like the trees of the field and garden! The Spring Showers are pouring down, be therefore verdant and flourish, like the Garden of Paradise! The Morning Star hath dawned! Enter ye into the Right Path! The Sea of Glory is rising; run ye therefore to the Shore of Advancement! Pure, excellent Water is flowing freely; do not then stay in the thirsty barren desert! Exalt your ambition on high, and make your purposes excelling! How long will ye endure in sloth? How long in negligence? You can find nothing to be gained

Digitized by Google

by idleness, except despair in this world and the next, and you can gain nothing except degradation and subjection by indulging in ignorance and superstition, and listening to the words of the thoughtless. The divine Graces are your succor and the heavenly Assistance your privilege; why should you not rejoice with all your soul and strive with your body?

One of the matters which needs complete and fundamental improvement with us, is the method of learning sciences and the system of studying literature and the arts, since by reason of the lack of method and of system, the way of learning is much disordered and difficult. The generalizations of the sciences have been very extensively discussed in such a manner that teachers might waste long years of their wits and lives upon them, though they are matters of sheer imagination, and do not result in any practical effect. It is weakening to dabble merely in words and thoughts.

If you reflect on the subject without bias, it will become clear and manifest that such studies, after they have been concluded, avail nothing, but are sheer theorizing, involving the pursuit of useless, fanciful ideas, and the resulting unprofitable discussions.

There is no doubt that to engage in such kinds of theorizing, intellectual inquiries and unpractical reasoning, in such flights of verbal imagination, is the cause of much waste of time and futil-

Digitized by Google

ity of life. It acts as an obstacle to a man and hinders him from studying those sciences and arts which are most necessary and useful to his fellow-creatures. The first thing to be pondered in every art before studying it, is to know what benefit comes from that art, and what fruit and result can be obtained.

If a universal profit acrues to the majority of mankind, from useful sciences surely a man should exert himself to study them with his whole soul. If the sole result of his study is to consist in useless reasonings, following after the imaginations of others, and becoming a centre of quarrel and dispute, out of which no one can derive any advantage—what is the sense of it, why should a man spend his life in empty discussion and argument?

As this subject needs treatment at length and a strong array of argument, in order that this position may be proved and demonstrated that some of those sciences, which today no one holds in regard, are or have been of extreme excellence, whilst likewise it is evident the nation has no need to study some of the sciences which are not the useful kind, therefore in the second volume of this book they will be mentioned in detail. Meanwhile I hope by the reading of this first volume there may result widespread effects in the views of the general public; because I have been led to write this by a sincere good purpose in the name

Digitized by Google

of God. Although people who can distinguish between sincere thoughts and false words are as rare as "red sulphur," the hopes of this writer are in the infinite grace of the Lord of Unity.

Let us now return to our principal subject. There are persons who think that such advances in culture must be introduced one after another and should be carried out patiently and slowly. What is their object in saying so? If their idea in suggesting delay is due to the requirements and necessity of wisdom in government, it is very acceptable and true, because certainly important affairs cannot be accomplished in haste; yea, hurry itself becomes the cause of less speed and languor. The growth of the world of politics is like unto the growth of human beings, who primarily spring from the seed, then develop gradually to the stages of coagulated blood and the fœtus in the womb, after which come the bones and the flesh, evolving a living being which at last grows up to be the finest production of the whole creation. Such as these are the necessary beginnings of created life and are founded on the Universal Wisdom.

In like manner also the evolution of politics cannot be developed at once from the depth of inefficiency and weakness to the zenith of fitness and perfection; yea, it is necessary that the perfect soul should study and assimilate day and night those methods which would advance the cause

Digitized by Google

of progress, in order that the nation and the state may, day by day, yea, moment by moment, advance and grow in all directions.

When three things are realized on earth by the divine favor, the earth will be endowed with new life, with measureless refinement and beauty; the first is the blowing of the Spring Winds. Secondly, the overflowing mercy of the Showers of Nissan (April). Thirdly, the heat of the bright Sun. When these three gifts are granted by the Infinite Divine Bounty then, by God's permission, the faded trees and branches, gradually becoming green and flourishing, will be ornamented with every sort of bud, blossom and fruit. In like manner, when the sincere purposes and the justice of the sovereign, the knowledge and perfect political efficiency of the ministers of state and the ambition and enthusiasm of the people are all realized at the same time, then indeed, the millennium of progress and human perfection, the consummation of the glory and the prosperity of state and nation will be accomplished.

But if, by delay, is meant that in every generation only a small proportion of the required social advances should be introduced, it is nothing but the old slothfulness and purposelessness over again, and in such a case no result can be the outcome except the repetition of futile discussions. If haste is harmful, purposelessness and slowness are a hundred thousand times more so. Yea, the middle

Digitized by Google

procedure is the best and worthy of praise. Thus, it has been said, "Do you lie between good and bad," which points to the limitation of excess and superfluity. Also, "Do not chain your hand over your neck, and do not stretch it straight out, but act between the two ways."

The most important of all the matters in question, and that with which it is most specially necessary to deal effectively, is the promotion of education. And no freedom or salvation could be imagined in the case of any nation which had not progressed in this greatest and most important point; just as the greatest cause of degradation and decadency of every nation is bigotry and ignorance.

As the majority of the people have now no knowledge of the ancient happenings, and they know yet less about facts that concern mankind in general and the necessary investigations of the present age, it is therefore needful that useful treatises and books should be written, explaining with convincing proofs whatever is most requisite for the Persian nation and what would be likely to conduce to the prosperity and advancement of human beings in general. And those treatises and books should be printed and distributed all over the kingdom, so that at least the eyes and ears of the distinguished individuals of the nation may be opened, and they may make endeavors towards promoting their sacred glory.

Digitized by Google

The dissemination of high thoughts is the motive power in the arteries of this transitory world; yea, it is the soul of all peoples. Thoughts are infinite as the sea, and the ways and manners of life are like embankments and dykes against the waves; and not until the sea moves do the waves rise up and cast on shore the pearls of wisdom.

"O Brother, thou art wholly in essence thought;
What is the rest of thee but bones and sinews?"

The thoughts of the people should be turned to whatsoever thing is today worthy and deserving of attention. And this cannot be done except by means of the most careful explanations of things, combined with the clearest proof of statements. For the poor people are ignorant of the world, and though no doubt they seek and desire to arrive at prosperity and well-being, they are blinded by the veils of ignorance and remain powerless.

Bear in mind, what a terrible cause of degradation and of contempt amongst nations is the lack of education! Today, the greatest of all the nations and tribes of the world, so far as population goes, is the Chinese, who number a little over 400,000,000 souls. That state ought therefore to be most exalted above all states, and that nation the most renowned of all the nations of the world. But the reverse is now the case, because of China's deficiency in the sciences and in education, in

Digitized by Google

moral and material civilization; so that she is the weakest and most impotent of all the weak nations and states. Not many years ago, a handful of English soldiers did battle with her, and so completely was China defeated that her capital, Pekin, was conquered by them. Now, supposing the people and state of China were to climb to the level of the highest degree of modern education and were equipped with the arts of civilization, all the states on earth might assault her without success, and their armies would return to their native countries defeated and powerless.

Stranger than this is the story of the Japanese kingdom, which was originally subject to China and under the protection of the Chinese Government. A few years ago Japan opened her eyes, and studied the methods of progress and civilization of the present day. She encouraged the development of the sciences and common handicrafts, and strove with all her power and capacity to improve her position, until she attracted to herself the attention of the whole of humanity, and although her population is only about one-sixth, yea, one-tenth, of that of China, the power of her Government has reached such a pitch that, in recent times, she waged war against the Chinese and at last compelled them to come to terms with Japan.

Let it be closely considered, accordingly, that both governments and peoples owe their glory

Digitized by Google

and well-being and freedom to education and civilization. Hence it is necessary that many schools should be opened in all the cities of Persia, even in the villages and small towns, in order that everyone may in every possible way be encouraged to see that the children be taught reading and writing. If necessary, make this even compulsory, for, until the veins and tendons of the nation stir with life, will any study and adoption of improvements be of any avail; because the nation is like unto the body, zeal and resolution are like unto the soul, so that the soulless body cannot move. Now, this mighty capacity of enthusiasm is most highly evidenced in the disposition of the Persians, its motive power is to be the extension of the sphere of education.

But there are men who believe that it is not necessary and desirable to acquire from other nations these principles of civilization and of progress towards the acme of human prosperity in worldly matters, in the laws, in the spread of knowledge, in the various social betterments and perfectings; and that, on the contrary, it is more fitting and advisable that the government and nation of Persia, after having studied and examined deeply into the subjects involved, should themselves originate the measures that shall lead to success.

Certainly, if it were possible to gather together the vigorous intellects and the far-seeing talents of

Digitized by Google

the most eminent men in the country, as well as the perseverance and enthusiasm of the most prominent statesmen and the persuasive strength of the most intelligent and competent persons, who have knowledge of the great laws governing political affairs; and if with united endeavor and steadfastness they were to consider and discuss both the highest general principles and the smallest details; then perhaps, as the result of fruitful and righteous deliberation, there might be a general improvement in some of the national concerns. But the counsellors would, in most instances, be obliged to learn from other countries, because, during several centuries, millions of people lived and died before the elements of modern progress came into existence.

Supposing, however, we close our eyes to this fact, and supposing we wish to attain to a similar degree of progress; what would happen?

Firstly, many generations would pass away before we could obtain what we desire. Consider for example, that in other kingdoms experiments were made for a long time before steam-power was discovered; and through it many things have been made easy which were difficult or beyond the abilities of man. How many centuries would be required if, the use of steam having been abandoned, it were attempted to find another force similar to it. So that it is better there should be no delay in making use of this power, whilst en-

Digitized by Google

deavors may continually be made meanwhile to find a possibly greater one.

In like manner, take the case of the other arts, sciences, handicrafts, and political institutions of proved advantage, which are the outcome of centuries of experiment and whose general benefit and utility have been demonstrated and manifested in the fame and greatness of states and the comfort and advancement of nations. Is it right that you shall abandon them without any reason and seek other methods of progress? Until such new methods come into existence and their substantial utility is evidenced and proved, many years must pass, and many lives come to an end. "Yet we are in the turning of the same lane."

The superiority in the civilization of posterity over their ancestors is conditioned by this, that they take over the accumulated knowledge of their predecessors and follow in their footsteps in those discoveries which have been tested in former times by the touchstone of experience and by the great benefits of which have been proved. Besides which, they themselves make other discoveries and add them to the store for future generations. So it is clear that, whilst posterity takes over the knowledge and follows the example of its ancestors, the special discoveries of the former are unknown to the latter; but this is conditioned by the fact that the posterity must be a people of progress and perfecting, because there have been

Digitized by Google

many descendants who have not possessed a single drop of the infinite ocean of their forefathers' sciences.

Let us reflect a moment. We assume that a people is created on earth by the divine Power. Surely, now, whilst they are here, those souls need many things for their renown, happiness, comfort and peace. Is it easier for them to acquire such things from the other existing creatures, or is it easier entirely to originiate whatever they may require for human happiness out of their own heads, spreading the items of progress over numberless ages?

If it be said that the laws and principles and bases of progress towards the highest degrees of civilization, which are current in other countries, do not suit the conditions and the familiar requirements of the Persians, and that therefore it is necessary that the rulers of the kingdom should strive in Persia itself to inaugurate the reforms which are suitable to the condition of the country; let me ask these objectors to explain wherein lies the harmfulness of the reforms in question?

Will the condition of the Persians be injured by the reconstruction of the kingdom, the repairing of the roads, the possession of the means of strengthening the weak, quickening the poor, adopting methods of progress for the whole people, and the increase of the public wealth; the

Digitized by Google

widening of the domain of education, the regulation of government, the freedom of rights, the safety of life and property, of honor and reputation? The harm resulting from other methods is manifest and obvious in every kingdom, and not confined to any particular place; and all such imaginings come from want of wisdom and of knowledge and poverty of thought. Yea, most of those who are opposed and bitter against these agreements, concealing in truth their selfishness behind the veils of futile words and openly making speeches which have no connection whatever with what lurks in their hearts; such persons disturb the minds of the weak.

O people of Persia! Purify and sanctify your hearts, which is a divine trust, from the pollution of self-conceit, adorning them with the crown of sincerity and harmony, in order that the sacred glory and eternal majesty of so resplendent a nation may dawn and be revealed in the Orient of Prosperity. An end will soon come to these few days of earthly life which are disappearing as the shadow! Make every effort and strive to obtain for yourselves the favor and help of the Lord of Unity; so as to leave behind you a name of goodness and a tale of favorable mention in the hearts and on the tongues of your successors; as it is written, "And create for me a truthful tongue in the Last Days."

Blessed is a man who forgets his own good self-

Digitized by Google

interest, like the Beloved Ones of the Threshold of God, and throws the ball of resolution on to the race ground of the common interest! Thus by the divine Bounty and heavenly Assistance, he will cause this glorious nation again to attain the Zenith of its former Grandeur, and these desolate regions to become refreshed by New Life! So that, as the Nature-renewing Spring, he will give to the trees of Human Souls the holy blessings of Spiritual Leaves, Flowers and Fruits!

THE END

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

This book is under no circumstances to be taken from the Building

form 410

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google